

*'Ukuba yindoda kwelimesha'* ('To be a man in these times'): Fatherhood, marginality and forms of life among young men in Gugulethu, Cape Town.

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### Acknowledgements:

I do not have proper words to convey my deepest gratitude and respect to my thesis supervisor, Professor Fiona Ross. But let me say *enkosi, ukwanda kwalima ngumthakathi* for your excellent guidance, care, *patience*, and providing me with an excellent atmosphere for doing research. You were always there for me during trying times in my life especially when I lost my close friend, my father. You inspired me to become an independent researcher and helped me realize the power of critical reasoning. The journey shall continue! You always demonstrated what a brilliant and hard-working scientist can accomplish. From the bottom of my heart, *enkosi* Fiona!

I would also like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my mentor, Professor Pamela Reynolds. You have been a tremendous mentor for me. I would like to thank you for encouraging my research. I will always remember those meetings at your place, but above all, thank you for introducing me to the *Elements of Style* by Strunk William which changed my academic writing. I so wish every child could be exposed to *the small book*. A big thank you to all my friends and staff members in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town for your role in stimulating my intellectual creativity. I also wish to thank the Children's Institute especially its former Director Professor Shirley Pendlebury and Helen Meintjes for their support and permission to use infants study data. In support of my research, I would also like to send a special thank you to Wenner Gren Fellowship in the Department of Social Anthropology at UCT as well as the National Research Foundation (NRF) for their financial backing.

To my gorgeous wife, Alakhe, thank you for your understanding that we could not always live together in order for me to make progress. In my physical absence as a migrant labourer, you took full charge in raising our beautiful daughter almost alone – Lungelani Ukuzakwe-Nkosi. I am excited that I will be next to you to raise together our new addition to our nuclear family – Alunamida Uthando lwe-Nkosi. You have been my best friend and great companion; you loved, supported, encouraged, entertained, and helped me get through this agonizing period in the most positive way.

The most humble thank you goes to the men and their families who treated me like one of their sons. You guys will always be part of my life. In Xhosa we say *maẓenethole ntozakuthi, ukwanda kwalima ngumthakathi*.

## Abstract

My thesis examines how young, marginalised men in Gugulethu, a poor township in Cape Town, formulate their conceptions of fatherhood and fathering, and understand their roles and involvement with their children. Far from being a simple biological function, the nature of fatherhood among these young men is shaped by social, economic, political and historical conditions and by the moral standards that surround their daily existence. The men who are the focus of this study were selected on the basis of findings from an earlier study of infants born to HIV+ women. That study demonstrated the erratic nature of fatherhood in the picture of infant life. I traced some of the fathers of those infants, and developed a snowball sample. The young men in this study live a life of social displacement and alienation. They do not have access to gainful employment; many have been imprisoned; all use drugs; few are in stable relationships; few have independent households despite having fathered children. I show in the thesis that while the relationships I describe are unique in many ways, core cultural tropes, such as the significance of children, the role of marriage, the social place of initiation, among others, play through them, albeit in ways that undermine their potential. Despite a rhetoric which exhorts men to 'be responsible', most of the challenges that confront young African men today can be traced to legacies of colonialism, urbanisation, and apartheid which destroyed clans and families' ability to retain both the specific practices and the meaning and function of traditional practices and the material means by which families could be maintained. I note in particular the absence of father figures in these young men's lives. These findings lead me to explore the role of men in attachment. While many men have been able to create positive self-identities and roles, those with whom I worked have struggled to attain socially sanctioned ideals of masculinity, work, parenting and partnering. They inhabit forms of masculinity that rest on danger, even as they desire social approval. Drawing from Raewyn Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity, I show how these masculinities are not predetermined but constructed within a specific social and historical context.

**Key words:** *ukwaluka/initiation*, masculinity, children, fatherhood, Gugulethu, social attachment, abandonment

## Glossary of Terms

- Abakhwetha*: initiates.
- Abantakwe*: brothers.
- Abantwana bangaphandle*: outside children (children born outside of the marriage).
- Abantwana bempazamo*: children of a mistake – unplanned children.
- Abaphantsi or izinyanya*: ancestors.
- Amakhazi amancinci*: small bride-wealth payments.
- Amakwerekwere*: a derogatory name for foreign nationals.
- Ebublanti*: in the kraal.
- Hokies* or *bungalows*: backyard informal housing structures either built by zinc or wood and sometimes out of plastic and cardboard material.
- Idladla lam*: my home (informal terminology, locally known as township lingo).
- Idlolo lomfazi or ukungazali*: barren.
- Ibule*: whore.
- Intlanga*: small scarifications.
- Ijwabi*: foreskin.
- Ijwayela*: unmarried woman who is thought to be beyond marriageable stage
- Ikhankatha*: the initiate's guardian.
- Ikhaya*: home/house.
- Ikwala*: Lit. 'a new man'; describes the new status of a man post-initiation.
- Ilable*: literally means coal but in this context the term refers to a man who is raising a child whose biological father is either in question or known to some including the child's mother.
- Ilobola*: bride wealth.
- Imali yokuzonwabisa*: money for enjoyment.
- Imbeleko*: the introduction of a new born baby to the ancestors.
- Imbola ebomvu*: red ochre.
- Imibhaco*: traditional attire.
- Indlu yesitena*: a brick house.
- Indoda yonkwenene*: a real man (references maturity, initiation, entitlement to participate in/perform cultural rituals, wisdom).
- Ingcibi*: the surgeon for circumcision.
- Inggadi*: the third wife
- Inja*: a dog
- Injakazi*: a female dog.
- Inkaba*: umbilical cord.
- Inkosikazi yomtshato*: a formal wife as it is commonly known; a partner in an acknowledged marriage.
- Inkwenkwe*: a boy.
- Inqalathi*: a young boy or boys assisting the initiate.
- Inqithi*: the cutting off of a finger (ritual).
- Intanga*: the small house usually reserved for guests.
- Intlawulo/imali yesisu*: compensation for impregnation outside of marriage. Often called 'damages' in English.
- Intloko yekhaya*: head of the homestead.
- Intlonipho*: respect.
- Iphela*: cockroach – colloquialism for a minibus taxi (so named because of its poor condition).
- Iqgirha*: traditional healer.
- Isifebe*: a loose woman.
- Isifede sendoda*: a useless man.

*Isifede*: a weak man.  
*Isiko*: the ritual (also means the initiates' wound.)  
*Isishumane*: one who is afraid to seek love from a woman.  
*Ityotyombeni*: a shack  
*Izitimela*: years one has been initiated/circumcised.  
*Kuronta*: the rondavel house.  
*Omalume*: uncles (sing. Umalume).  
*Ongantweni*: plural – individuals who show no sense of purpose in life.  
*Onolali* or *amadoda asezilalini*: rural or country men.  
*Onolokishi*: township men.  
*Otatomkbulu*: grandparents.  
*Otatomncinci*: child's father's younger brothers.  
*Otsotsi*: thugs.  
*Shebeen*: an informal place that sells alcohol.  
*Siyatyana nje ukuzonwabisa*: sex for fun.  
*Skollie*: gangster  
*Tata*: father (Xhosa. In Zulu he is called *ubaba*).  
*Tik*: methamphetamine.  
*Ubukwala*: the stage of being a new man.  
*Udingezweni*: the one who wonders around.  
*Udlalani*: a player or womaniser.  
*Ukosula*: literally means 'to wipe off'.  
*Ukudlanga*: the cutting off of the foreskin.  
*Ukudliswa*: food poisoning.  
*Ukuhlalisana*: cohabitation.  
*Ukukhuthuza*: to pickpocket.  
*Ukuqaba*: the painting of the initiate.  
*Ukuqiniswa*: protection.  
*Ukusgcuza*: train hitching.  
*Ukuyala*: giving the new man advice  
*Ukwaluka*: going to the bush for circumcision.  
*Umbuyekwendeni*: the one who left marriage.  
*Umakoti*: a newly married woman.  
*Umdlanga*: assegai.  
*Umfana*: singular – a young man  
*Umfazi*: a wife  
*Umgidi*: welcoming back ceremony of a 'new man'  
*Umgulukudu katsotsi*: a serious and dangerous thug.  
*Ummumzana womzi*: household head.  
*Umqakheve*: a child of a married woman but from a different father.  
*Umqombothi*: traditional home brewed beer.  
*Umzi*: homestead.  
*Unontyintyi*: female alcoholic  
*Unoziqazana*: initiates' mother.  
*Uphakamile*: he thinks highly of himself.  
*Usothu*: father of the initiate.  
*Uyabanda*: cold, frigid, unavailable to her husband.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction and thesis orientation

In November 2008, I joined the Children's Institute of the University of Cape Town (UCT) as a junior researcher to conduct ethnographic fieldwork of infants born to HIV-positive mothers in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, South Africa<sup>1</sup>. The project originated out of concern about the high infant mortality rate<sup>2</sup> in South Africa, which was driven in part by the high rate of vertical transmission of HIV<sup>3</sup> to children, inadequate access to medical care, poor access to decent sanitation and potable water and other diseases associated with poverty. At the time, the vertical transmission rate was estimated to be between 19% and 36% (Coetzee et al., 2005). Ten HIV-positive pregnant mothers were recruited at the time of their antenatal voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) at the Gugulethu Midwife Obstetrics Unit (MOU). The study, henceforth identified as the Infants' Study, tracked the experiences of the women and their families over the period from recruitment to their infants' first birthday. I conducted multiple in-depth interviews, documented household occupants' daily activities, paying particular attention to everyday practices of care, recorded life histories, conducted 24-hour recall activities with the mother or caregiver, and initiated structured 30 minute observations on a weekly basis with four of the mothers.

While the 2008 study's focus was on the infant and those providing primary care, the study also reached outwards to others who impinged on the infant's life. One novel aspect of the project was an in-depth study I initiated with the fathers who were interacting with their infants, providing insight into the role and influence of fathers on infants' well-being and health decision-making. In addition, throughout the fieldwork period I collected data from young, mostly unmarried fathers in Gugulethu, family members, traditional healers, community elders and church leaders. This led to the

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<sup>1</sup> Gugulethu means 'Our Pride'. I provide more detail about the space, its history and its population in Chapter Two.

<sup>2</sup> Research shows that "in 2007, the majority of registered child deaths were infants (76%), with 22% of these deaths occurring in the first month of life, i.e. the neonatal period. The majority of the deaths (54%) occurred in the post-neonatal age group (1-11 months). Of the 61 335 under-5 deaths registered in 2007, diarrhoeal disease accounted for 21% of deaths, lower respiratory infections for 16% and ill-defined natural causes for 13%" (Nannan et al, 2012:iv).

<sup>3</sup> Vertical transmission of HIV (mother-to-child or MTC transmission) is defined as the transmission of HIV infection from an HIV positive pregnant woman to her infant. This can occur during pregnancy, during delivery or afterwards during breastfeeding (Dept. of Health, 2010).

formulation of a Doctoral study that was triggered, among other things, by fascinating conversations with informants who highlighted the challenges faced by unmarried fathers in their attempts to involve themselves and be active presences in their baby's lives even when their relationships with the infants' mothers had ended. The dissertation study presented here explores the predicaments of fathers drawn from this sample.

The second event that stirred my interest occurred when I revisited two anthropological articles written by (now Emeritus) Professor Pamela Reynolds. The first, written in 1984, is entitled "*Men without children*", and examines the effects on men who were denied the right to live with their children under apartheid. Her brief study reported on the views of men living as migrants in all-male hostels in the 1980s speaking about their poverty as men who were denied the right to live with their children (Reynolds, 1984:10). My study builds on this to reflect on aspects of the current status of children and fathers in Gugulethu. My sample reflects the legacies of the context Reynolds described; many of the men did not ever experience sustained relationships with fathers. The thesis argues that children who are born out of wedlock, in particular, in this community face real socio-cultural and economic challenges, not least in terms of their social and physical well-being.

Reynolds' second article entitled "*The ground of all making: State violence, the family, and political activists*" was written in 2000. In the study, she worked with forty student activists talking about their support structures and how they survived the political hardships they experienced at the hands of the apartheid government. Using genealogies and tables to present their life histories, she shows that many young people lacked sustained interaction with their fathers. Their emotional support was provided largely by mothers, and their experiences of nurturance were fractured – that is, that there was not a great deal of consistency in caregiving. She also demonstrates that this is not for lack of effort but because apartheid laws shaped the social, political and economic circumstances of their lives, including the consistency of their care.

In this dissertation, I return to the predicament outlined by Reynolds (1984); that under apartheid, many African men could not live with their children with the result that "children [were] denied the possibility of living with their fathers for year upon year: sometimes for their entire childhood" (Reynolds, 1984:1). A range of apartheid laws limited African people's access to urban lives in South Africa. Acts pertaining to Separate Development designated specified areas of the country as ethnic reserves. The Coloured

Labour Preference Area, enacted in what was then the Cape Province, restricted African people's access to work in the Province. Influx control laws were cruelly enacted. Africans could only reside in urban areas if they held 'Section 10 rights'.<sup>4</sup> The effect was to separate labouring men from their wives and children, many of whom remained in the Bantustans, particularly the so-called 'independent' homelands of Transkei and Ciskei (designated as homelands for the AmaXhosa). A rich literature, of which Reynolds' work is an important component, explores the effects of these laws on the constitution of Black family life during apartheid (see discussion below and in Chapter Two). My dissertation therefore start from the premise that, now that we no longer have these inhumane apartheid laws restricting the movement and settlement of black Africans, what is the nature of the relationship between a father and a child, particularly between the unmarried father and his child? The question arises from the highly matrifocal consequences of apartheid laws on African family life in South Africa and seeks to explore these legacies in contemporary family formations within a particular subset of the category 'fathers'.

Reynolds' 1984 study was conducted in Gugulethu and Langa<sup>5</sup> townships which were designated as residential areas for Africans. In revisiting some of this work, I have decided to concentrate on working intensively in one area. My choice of Gugulethu as a field site was not arbitrary. I drew on the fact that some of the fathers from the earlier study with whom I had excellent relations resided there and because Gugulethu is one of the oldest African suburbs in Cape Town and as a consequence is home to people who have extensive family histories of long-term urban residence, a factor that as I will show, has implications for how men understand and enact fatherhood.

Furthermore, Gugulethu is one of the areas where many unemployed African fathers live.<sup>6</sup> The lack of employment makes it difficult for men to meet cultural expectations of marriage and family life, support and social status as these are understood in this community. As I explore in the thesis, men's lack of employment and

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<sup>4</sup> The Bantu Urban Areas Act of 1964, for example, stipulated that African women had to receive permission to join their husbands in the city. This meant, if a 'section 10 woman' married a 'Homeland man', the apartheid state forced her to leave the city and join her husband in 'his homeland' (Bahre, 2002:303).

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Two for the history of this township and how it fit into the broader picture in terms of the formation of Gugulethu few years later.

<sup>6</sup> I describe this in Chapter Two

income-generating capacity has implications for the kinds of responsibility men can and do take for their lovers, girlfriends and children.

In South Africa, women and children who reside in rural areas have been obliged as a consequence of the devastation of rural life ways caused by capitalism in its colonial and apartheid forms, to rely on sometimes irregular remittances sent by their spouses, fathers and sons (in recent years from daughters as well) working in urban areas. “In return, migrants [who sent these remittances] were expected to benefit from the investments made in rural areas by their remittances during times of economic and social distress” (Richter et al., 2012:9). These remittances also played an important function for migrants, enabling them to maintain strong ties with the rural home and the relatives living there (see Ferguson 1985 for a like argument pertaining to Lesotho), even when men had established another household with a girlfriend or second wife in the city. I explore this in more detail in Chapter Two, discussing how different generations over time were able to maintain and have mutual benefits in those relationships with the countryside.

A number of key anthropological studies (Hunter, 1961; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963; Murray, 1980; Cole, 1987; Jones, 1990 & 1992; Henderson, 1999) provide insight into these historical changes and their impact on black families, particularly on children. They show unambiguously the ways that socio-economic constraint operate to limit and undermine black family life. Despite this, there is a growing body of literature and social interventions that see black men as ‘problem fathers’ and seek to remedy their failure, without cognisance of the historical and contemporary conditions under which fatherhood is enacted. I describe in the thesis some of these initiatives that have gathered momentum in Africa and elsewhere in an attempt to get fathers involved in their children’s lives. For instance, the African Fathers Initiative (AFI) is a continent-wide movement for the generation, collection, and dissemination of knowledge and skills about fatherhood in Africa (<http://www.africanfathers.org.zw/>). The model is based on an idea of ‘paternal involvement’ which rests largely on the notion of role models and shared domestic and caring labour. While a positive initiative to counter the decades-long destruction of African family life and men’s relationships with children, it is nevertheless worth exploring the visibility or lack thereof of such initiatives in less popular areas such as Gugulethu where fathers in poor conditions also face structural challenges such as the ability to provide financially for their children.

My dissertation explores household dynamics in situations where children are born out of wedlock. It shows the accommodative nature and flexibility of black cultural practices in negotiating children's attachment into family structures (sometimes referred to as structured relations of belonging that cohere through time), and also the points at which these do not succeed. Drawing both from my own experience of my father's relationships and their effect on our family (see below) and field work data, the thesis shows how masculinity is performed, sustaining gender inequalities and patriarchal systems of power as well as offering support. Here, I draw on the notion of hegemonic masculinity as proposed by Connell (1995; 2005). Connell defines hegemonic masculinity "...as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (2005:77). The crux of her argument is the assertion that there is no single definition of masculinity. She asserts that different masculinities compete for legitimacy and acceptance. This hegemonic masculinity tends to dominate at a certain historical period and so undermines other masculinities. I explore her ideas in more depth in Chapter Three; here, suffice to say that Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity is important for my thesis because it acknowledges that masculinity is not pre-given at birth but influenced/constructed by social contexts in which individuals find themselves. Hegemonic masculinity is influenced by men's relationships with their female and male friends, family members, community, and all those around them – and particularly (but not only) other men they 'hang out' with.

Ramphela (2000) argues that black men during apartheid in South Africa occupied a social and economic status below that of white men, women and children. They were called 'boys', a term that captured the symbolic position they were meant to occupy in the power hierarchy of racist South Africa. She maintains that black men's escape from complete powerlessness was (and, I argue, still is) the control they exercise over African women and children. My discussion of initiation and the Five Stages of becoming a man (see Chapter Four) is very useful to explain firstly why it is considered an insult for a circumcised black man to be called a 'boy' which translate to *inkwenkwe* in Xhosa. But also it helps to explain the roots of men's violent behaviour towards the women and children with whom they associate.

In contrast to the dominant notion of men as having undergone initiation rituals and being providers and heads of households and homesteads, the men I worked with in Gugulethu expressed different ideas of what it means to be an *indoda yokwenene*, ‘a real man’. These alternative framings of masculinity involve *ukuziphatba* (to be a person who is free and independent), being seen to be *udlalani* (‘a player’, a womaniser), being able to exert dominance over women/girlfriends, even violently, taking risks, and participating in criminal acts. The ability to impregnate women is an important feature of their manhood. Indeed, there is considerable social stigma attached to not having children as I explore in chapter four and five. It has given rise to dense derogatory terms, such as *isishumane* (‘one who is afraid of women’), *uchama amanzi* or *uyaphosa* (ejaculating water, missing the target – referring to a failure to impregnate). I describe the meaning of these beliefs in their historical contexts and contemporary social uses and consequences in later chapters.

### **Getting to know my informants in Gugulethu**

The sample of men which forms the basis of this research was, as I have noted above, generated through the Infants’ Project. As such, the material here presents an argument based on the experiences of a specific subset of young adult men in Cape Town. Participants included amaXhosa, amaZulu and one Sotho man. Such ethnic diversity made an interesting exploration, not least because it means that political-economic context rather than ethnicity per se becomes the foreground in understanding social practices. This is not to say that cultural praxis does not matter, but rather, as the historical and neo-Marxist turn in anthropology demonstrated, that political-economic and social circumstances are critical in shaping cultural and social practice. My advantage in doing the research is the fact that I speak both the isiZulu and isiXhosa languages, with the latter being my native language. Of course this raises some complex issues around identity and the ‘researcher-researched’ relations, which I explore in more detail in Chapter Two. Working with poor and unemployed young men poses its own challenges when trying to build relationships in the field. This was even worse for me working among “my people” because the expectation is that I understand their suffering better than an outsider. Even though I was partially employed throughout my research, my association with the university automatically meant that I could afford to buy or give them small change when I saw their struggles. As desperate as I was to win their trust, I was very careful not to establish our friendship on material things. However, the fact that

I am university graduate gave me considerable social status. For instance, the type of girls/women my friends would suggest I ‘go for’ (propose love) were teachers, nurses or in parliament. They were always disappointed because throughout my field work, I let them down because I never approached any of these women. It is possible that in the end they saw me as *isishumane* (a man scared of women), but as a married man it was not something I would do just to please friends. To have a friend with my qualifications also boosted my friends’ social appearance. For a change, people showed interest in them to enquire about this new guy who has chosen guys that were considered to be ‘almost nothing in the community but drug addicts’. There were instances where I felt my educational background played part in how they viewed my opinion. We could be talking for instance about a soccer match but I could see that they respected my analyses more than theirs<sup>7</sup>.

All fathers in the study were aged between 20 and 44 at the beginning of research in 2011. In South Africa, the law recognises adulthood as being the age of 18 except in particular cases.<sup>8</sup> However definitions of childhood are culturally-shaped and may depend on criteria other than chronology). In South Africa, as in other parts of Southern Africa (see Durham, 2004; Mayer, M. J, et al, 2011; NYDA, 2011), the social definition of ‘youth’ includes those aged up to 35. And, as I show, other aspects than chronology are significant in identifying the ‘age’ at which a youth is recognised as having full adult capacities. This is certainly the case for amaXhosa, for whom male rites of passage form a significant component of the definition of manhood (see Chapter Four).

The men in my sample share several important features, including that, unlike many of the more recent residents in Cape Town, none of them has strong connections with relatives in what are now known as *emaXhoseni/emakhaya* (the Xhosa place); the Eastern Cape Province and Kwa-Zulu Natal, unlike their fathers and grandfathers in the past. That the latter had strong ties to these areas was in part a function of an illegitimate political-economy in which they did not hold urban rights and thus had to return to ‘homelands’ regularly. The men with whom I worked do not send remittances and they

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<sup>7</sup> My friends knew that I almost played in the premier league in South Africa had it not been the passing away of my grandmother on the same day a newly promoted soccer team showed interest in me. We were playing with my cousins in front of my late brother’s shack in Johannesburg in 1997, Tembisa Township, when a team scout went pass and realised that I had special talent in soccer.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. while young people are eligible to vote at 18, the age of sexual consent is 16; young people aged 12 and over may seek contraception without guardian consent; a termination of pregnancy may be sought without guardian consent at any age; a youth may consent to initiation at the age of 16 (note, female initiation is illegal) with assent from a guardian.



hardly attend relatives' funerals, let alone cultural rituals in the former homelands. As Rebekah Lee (2009) has shown in her study of three generations of women in Gugulethu, shifts in familial and associational ties are directly related to broad shifts in the political-economy, and younger generations of urban residents are increasingly less likely to have close ties with rural kin. In the sample on which my study is based, this is compounded by the complexities of men's father's family-making practices, a topic I explore in more detail in relation to my own life below and in relation to some of the men in my sample in later chapters.

In the thesis I also carefully follow the mobility or lack thereof of the children of these men because it tells us something about the maintenance or otherwise of the lineage. We know from the previous studies (Gilbert & Crankshaw, 1999; Posel & Casale, 2003; Hall, 2007) that children are among the very mobile groups in our society, almost similar to migrant workers, but is this the case with this group? Most of the men had not paid 'damages' for impregnating women.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the majority of the children in the study are not given their fathers surnames, so we ask, what does this mean for the child? The dissertation traces back the traditional meanings of these cultural practices and discusses how fathers themselves feel about them considering their circumstances here now.

The central theme of the dissertation is that in the past extended family networks and neighbours played a significant role in assisting to raise children but the need for parents to earn a living in the cities has compromised the role of kin members. Contrary to a literature that argues for a dyadic maternal-child relation as being the most significant mode of care, I argue that African children benefited immensely from extended networks because they were cared for by a whole host of other kin members apart from their parents. One effect was a widening of social networks that facilitated finding employment or income-generating opportunities because their social networks were much wider. The structure of housing and urban design under apartheid meant that not only are poor people located at a distance from urban work opportunities, but also that the dense kin networks that might have facilitated opportunities were diminished as

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<sup>9</sup> Among the Nguni-language speakers, once a man impregnates a woman out of wedlock he needs to pay the woman's family for damaging/impregnating their daughter. In the past, the payment was made in the form of cattle but now it is mostly paid in monetary value and the amount varies greatly according to the woman's educational level, the number of children she has had as well as her age. The money is meant to contribute to feeding the child and also as a way of compensation to her family. Throughout the thesis I use the term compensate rather than the colloquialism 'damages' to refer to this practice of payment.

a consequence of non-contiguous residence. Similarly, older networks based on 'home person' ties have become less salient among the young men with whom I worked, once more limiting the *ad hoc* and word of mouth modes of employment that characterised earlier job-seeking activities. Consequently, what I am seeing now in Gugulethu with families preferring to live in nuclear arrangements has its origin in the urban structure of accommodation which never considered the way of life for black people. The less dense arrangements of kin networks afforded by the particular distribution of housing in Cape Town deprives young people of useful social networks and limits children's access to other family members who might help them in times of economic and social distress. With regards to this, in Chapter Two I describe two cases of children who could have benefited by having extended family members nearby. Because of my understanding of the black culture in this community when it comes to communal expectation for all men to protect young children, I had to intervene in one of the cases to protect the child even though this pose great ethical dilemmas for my role as a researcher.

Throughout the thesis I argue that my sample and those associated with them, both men and women, are trying to find their way in a social environment that has given up on them. Their narratives show that often these men were let down early in their lives, by the absence of their fathers. Many were brought up in families run by their mothers in the absence of significant other male figures from the broader kin network or clan. This has meant a loss in terms of providing guidance. However, the difficulties they encounter are not solely due to problems in the family – the state (both during and after apartheid) and civil society has also failed the men I worked with. By and large, the narrative of young black men does not give much hope; they are entrenched in a circle of generational failure. I am by no means suggesting that the story of all black fathering is one of doom and gloom but that it is important to understand why this may be so for some. In this regard Willis' (1977) work with children of the working class men is critical for my work in its take in explaining the decisions and paths such youth often take in life.

The project seeks to explore the forms of life of young men living in poverty with little prospect of normatively-defined social well-being. In particular, it explores how they incorporate or exclude relationships with children and the mothers of their children. The core group with which I worked consisted of ten unmarried fathers and two married men, a sample drawn from the findings of the earlier Infants' Study initiated in 2008. This data is augmented with interviews with elders and leaders; informal

conversations with a range of interlocutors; and wider discussions on fathering in South Africa; as well as the material generated from the fathering component of the Infants' Study that I initiated (see above).

Ethnographic methodology is emergent in nature and therefore requires the researcher to be flexible and to respond with new ideas and methods as the research deepens. I spent as much time as possible with the men selected as participants in the study. Fieldwork for this project, excluding the original Infants' Study from which this PhD research developed, began in November 2011 until March 2013. However, I continued informal visits with two of the families because of the special needs of the children involved (see Chapter Two). I conducted structured and semi-structured in-depth interviews, informal conversations and structured observations with fathers to document their life histories and to describe their recent and current experiences. I “hung-out” with fathers, accompanied them to health facilities, to their court appearances and participated in other aspects of their lives to the extent that they invited me to do so. I describe research methods and sample in more detail in Chapter Two, reflecting on the field work process and challenges faced in gathering my data. To protect identities of my informants, fake names have been used throughout the thesis, and I have disguised information that might reveal their locations.

My research was guided by the following broad questions which were continuously re-shaped according to the flow of the discussions. (A full interview schedule is attached as **Appendix A**.)

- What facilitates and/or inhibits fathers' involvement with their children?
- What influences the nature and extent of a father's involvement with his child in post-apartheid South Africa?
- To what extent do contemporary urban unmarried black-African fathers subscribe to what are understood to be 'traditional' cultural norms and practices about fatherhood and how are these understood?
- Is there greater possibility for unmarried fathers to engage more easily now with their children compared to the apartheid period?
- What are the obstacles that limit the kinds of relationships men would like to have with their children?
- How is fathering been constructed in this community?
- What is the status of a child in society?

My research aims to contribute to a contextual understanding of the daily life of contemporary unmarried African men who have sired children ('biological fathers' as they are often locally known, or what in the anthropological literature is referred to as progenitors)<sup>10</sup> who live in a suburb<sup>11</sup> marked by poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. The research explores how the changing urban context of social factors shape the father-child relationship; and how those factors are influenced by the father's current socio-economic situation. My dissertation addresses two critical gaps in the published research on fathers' involvement with their children. Initially, it aims to contribute by narrowing the void in research on unmarried black-African fathers' involvement with their children. Secondly, it provides an in-depth qualitative account of the forms of life among young, unmarried fathers and their relationship with their children in a highly unequal city. Most of the international research in this area is drawn from quantitative data about fatherhood and men's engagement with babies, and it is drawn mostly from psychology (for example, Ishii-Kuntz, 1994; Lamb, 1979; Radin, 1994; Mosely & Thomson, 1995). It is quite frequently suggested, for example by Marsiglio and Cohan (2000), that fathers' involvement should be studied using ethnographic tools. My study has taken up this challenge.

In developing the work, I have focused on questions of attachment, developing a notion of social attachment (as opposed to emotional attachment as developed in the psychological literature on mother-infant bonding) to give us a better view to understanding fathering. In the following chapters I explore the histories of bonding between particular men and their fathers, as well as between men and their children. The theory of bonding, also known as attachment theory, was first developed by a psychoanalyst, John Bowlby in 1969. Others such as Mary Ainsworth played a significant role in developing certain aspects of Bowlby's theory particularly the idea of attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can begin to explore the world (Bretherton, 1992:759). Attachment theory is based on the belief that a child has an inborn need to attach or bond with one main person, ideally the mother. The approach lies at the base of many assessments of emotional and cognitive development of young children (see Tomlinson, Cooper & Murray 2005 for a South African example).

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<sup>10</sup> Henceforth, the word "fathers" refers to unmarried Africans unless specified otherwise.

<sup>11</sup> Henceforth, I follow residents' usage and call it a "township".

Without denying the significance of the maternal role, here I am interested in the social dimensions of attachment, specifically the essential role played by African fathers in linking children to broader familial networks including lineages. The thesis broadens the understanding and application of attachment. It suggests that African men have long played an important role in their children's lives, besides the overly stated traditional roles of being a provider, protector and sometimes disciplinarian or ruler in the household. In developing a theoretical framework, I argue that African fathers used to attach their children into the lineage hence enabling them to have a clan name which is critical for one's identity and cultural rituals performed for them. These do not merely pertain to the welcome of a child but have implications for initiation and other rituals of belonging over the course of the life cycle, and thus for the continuity of relations with the living and dead. I offer an example of this in relation to my own family later in the chapter. Rituals are an important stage in welcoming young children in black families. A young child needs to be introduced to the ancestors for protection against evil spirits among other things, and incorporated into the social relations and structures that characterise desired forms of social life and relationship. However, changes in socio-economic environments disable young fathers from playing their attachment role. I show this to be the case for the children in this study, who are left in a very precarious situation as far as cultural rituals, paternal presence, social incorporation and social support are concerned.

An exploration of this magnitude is both exciting and emotionally draining. I worked for more than a year in poor households characterised by high unemployment rate among its members, some of whom were regular drug users and in some cases with HIV-positive parents/child. As a man myself (by which I mean a man who has undergone traditional rites of passage – of which, more, later in the thesis) and later in my field work also graduating to fatherhood status,<sup>12</sup> I draw on personal experience as well as my interactions with others. I begin with a personal experience of the notion of social attachment or failure thereof from my own family's point of view as this helps to demonstrate the importance of acknowledging and introducing children to *abaphantsi* or

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<sup>12</sup> I shall not bother the reader with the intricacies of my sleepless nights and phone calls in the early hours of the morning from my wife, who at the time was resident in the Eastern Cape in Butterworth, where she worked, distraught about a crying baby. Suffice it to say that it added an extra layer to the ways research and life are integrated.

*izinyanya* (ancestors) and the living among the Xhosa people, and offers a reflexive beginning to the dissertation.

My parents had nine children in their marriage. My twin sister and I are two of eight living children; four girls and four boys. Their first daughter died within the first three months after birth. At the time, my mother was staying with my grandparents in his village called *eMangweni*, far from the main gravel road and clinic. Their homestead was remote, built almost at the bottom of the hills. After losing their first daughter, my parents moved further inland, to our current village, *eMrhoshweni*. My mother had hard time *eMangweni* especially from my grandmother who had hoped my father would marry another woman. My mother says she hardly had time for her baby because of the house chores she had to perform as a young newly married woman (*umakoti*), fetching water from far away, having to prepare and cook samp every day, cleaning and responding to the wishes of her husband's sisters and parents. It still pains her to talk about her daughter because she believes she should not have died. My father, meanwhile, was working in Elliot, a small town about 73 kilometres away. He worked in road construction. As a general rule, he visited every few months for a weekend. He retired at the age of fifty-two. By that time he had moved to Grahamstown. My mother remained in *eMrhoshweni*, looking after their homestead (see also Ngwane, 2003). She used to visit him for few months and then would go back to the village to help in building their first two-room house and to look after his livestock, a herd of sheep. Like most migrant labourers, in the absence of my mother he fathered two boys in Elliot outside his marriage.

I met my half-brother, also named spontaneously Andile<sup>13</sup> by his mother, for the first time after our father's death in January 2013, when we were preparing for his funeral. Andile's younger brother Songezo had come to search for his father in our town, Indwe, about three years earlier, before embarking on traditional initiation procedures – '*ukwaluka*' ('going to the bush' as it is known). He had told us that he wanted to know his clan name and thence the clan's specific ways of performing cultural rituals, including *ukuqaba* (the painting), and *ukudlanga* (circumcision) and the rituals that surround initiation and seclusion (of these, more in Chapter Four). Other rituals among the Xhosa

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<sup>13</sup> He was born a year later after I was born.

people that are shaped by clan affiliation include *inqgithi* (the cutting of a finger) and *imbeleko* (the introduction of a new born baby to the ancestors).<sup>14</sup>

The point of interest for me here is how the failure to recognise and incorporate children born out of wedlock had complicated life for Songezo to a point where he could not go ahead with the circumcision ritual. Fearing that his friends would tease him for not having 'a clear identity' (in other words, not knowing his clan and its significance in rooting one into social relations) and fearing the possible social ostracisation that would result, as well as concerned to perform the initiation rituals correctly, he was inspired to hunt for his father despite the latter's absence from his life.

At the time he first came to our family home in Indwe, I was in Cape Town and was only told after the fact by my sister what had happened. She said they were all shocked and our father was visibly embarrassed. Songezo had asked taxi-men in town how to find his father. He was shown my father's car and he waited next to it so when my father and sister returned to the car he was sitting next to it. My sister says Songezo looked like one of my brothers so my father could not deny him. On arrival at home my mother called my father's sister to come and see what his brother had done. It was then that we came to know that our mother had been aware of my father's relationship with another woman in Grahamstown and the resultant children. Close friends in Elliot had told her about it.

Songezo slept over that night in the main house. In so-doing, he was recognised as having a claim on the main homestead, rather than being treated as a guest and given space in the *intanga* (the small house, usually reserved for guests). The following day my father gave him a goat for slaughtering at the initiation ritual, and my father and brother accompanied him to Elliot. Our father did not visit Songezo's mother, his ex-girlfriend, but returned home. Although he had acknowledged paternity and responsibility for the youth, and had taken appropriate steps to support Songezo's initiation, my father did not attend the ritual himself mainly because of the tension Songezo's sudden appearance

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<sup>14</sup> The purpose of *imbeleko* is not clear to many amaXhosa themselves. Elders in my village told me that *imbeleko* started long before Europeans arrived in South Africa and demanded changes in the way indigenous people lived their lives through for instance by introducing taxes. These elders say a sheep or goat, depending to what was available to that particular family, was slaughtered so that its skin could be *sisukene* (the process of softening an animal skin) so that the new born could have a blanket. They say new born babies were introduced to ancestors by talking *emaxhantini* (an elderly man speaking at the kraal's entrance) and ask for their protection for the new born.

caused in his marriage with my mother, despite the fact that she had accepted him as the child of her husband.

Since then we have remained close to our half-brothers. We are in regular contact and every December<sup>15</sup> they continue to visit our home even after our father died. Whenever we perform rituals, even after our father's death, they always offer to contribute something such as buying food to be cooked or alcohol.<sup>16</sup> My father's acknowledgement of the youth, made possible by my mother, shows the value of these rituals in affording children born under these circumstances with *ikhaya* (home).

This story highlights key themes I explore in later chapters. Among those is the often taken-for-granted assumed absolute power men are thought to have in their homesteads when it comes to decision-making which is not always the case in reality. Without my mother's acceptance and approval, no goat would have been given to Songezo for his initiation and no relationship between us, or between him and my paternal family, would have been sanctioned. I suggest that my father's story as a married man who impregnated another woman outside his recognised marriage might help us understand ways African masculinity is constructed by other migrants today in Cape Town. Another key theme that arises here is the value and status children occupy in black families and also the respect for ancestral ceremonies. Children play an important role in cementing family ties. When Andile and Songezo visit, they are housed in the main house or the *kuronta* (the rondavel reserved for ritual activity – i.e. a clear marker of their right to reside in the homestead; of their belonging). This does not mean that there is no tension in the relationship; rather it is to point to the flexibility of African modes of kinship in enabling incorporation even retrospectively. In this example, there was a formalised process through which my mother acknowledged my father's extra-marital children and admitted them into the homestead. For all that the man is conventionally considered the head of the homestead, as Ngwane (2003) shows, there are complex negotiations and emotional labours involved. It is considered humiliating for a man's wife if he makes children with other women, but this is not a matter for public discussion. Instead, the woman is stigmatised as *uyabanda* (cold, frigid, unavailable to her

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<sup>15</sup> The "Christmastime" to which Ngwane (2003) refers, marked the end of men's contractual eleven month periods on mines, during which migrants returned to their homesteads.

<sup>16</sup> These days success of any ritual or social gathering is measured by the amount of food and alcohol on offer which in turn determines a household social status.



husband), thus reinforcing existing patriarchal models of male sexuality and female submission.

For a married man to be able to attach his *abantwana bangaphandle* ('outside children') to his family (and give them his clan-name) he depends on his *inkosikazi yomtshato* ('formal wife' as it is commonly known; a partner in an acknowledged marriage<sup>17</sup>) to accept them and give the go-ahead for him to perform appropriate rituals and contribute financially to the upkeep of these children. Sometimes (though not in the case described above), this is enforced violently.

In incorporating the youths into his family and *umzi* (homestead), my father was acting in accord with a prevailing model of masculinity in which men take responsibility for children – a responsibility that includes giving them the tools for the development of their personhood (through, for example, initiation and sanctioned forms of marriage and residence) and their cultural well-being (through naming and enabling them to perform life-cycle rituals appropriately). This is markedly unlike what I observed among the men in my sample, many of whom aspired to this model but were unable to accomplish it, and who had themselves never experienced this kind of attention from their own fathers.

### **Anthropology 'at home'?**

Anthropologists have, in the past, especially in the early days of the discipline, often been strangers among the people they have studied. This is no longer necessarily the case. There are advantages and disadvantages for the anthropologist in being either a "stranger" or a "local" in terms of the nature of the field work and, perhaps, of the final monograph. Throughout my field work I was deeply aware of the fact that, as a qualitative researcher, I would need to be sensitive to my own cultural background especially when working with people whose cultural backgrounds I share and to be conscious of how that may influence the study. I made great efforts to be sensitive to participants' understanding of acceptable notions of behaviour and expression. One challenge in working "at home" is that sometimes participants refuse to explain certain things because they assume that the interlocutor knows the meanings. Indeed I encountered such challenges but after reminding those with whom I work of my position

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<sup>17</sup> This umbrella term may cover marriages formalized by the courts or through bride wealth transfers, although the latter carries more weight.

in our group discussions meanings were offered. One advantage of working “at home” is that where I had a different view of a particular issue I was able to use my knowledge to raise debate especially on cultural issues. I am aware that we might all consider ourselves to be amaXhosa (*plural*) and amaZulu (*plural*) but we have different upbringings, which shape the way we talk and reflect on issues around us. This reflection is important and indeed it acknowledges the fact that it is not possible to be completely objective. My upbringing as a Xhosa person will always have an influence on how I perceive and interpret the world. My challenge was to be conscious of my context and, therefore, aware of its possible effects. In offering a story drawn from my own familial experience, I hope to demonstrate the reflexive approach I have drawn on and to show that social practice is not homogenous.

## **Chapter outline**

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter Two describes methodological issues and the tools I have used for data collection. The chapter addresses some of the philosophical commitments associated with the techniques employed in this research. I also deal with contentious issues on my decisions for choosing Gugulethu as a field site, identification of informants and all the related challenges I faced in the process of my field work. The Chapter describes the histories of this community so that one get to appreciate the manner in which its existence shape the lives of this current generation. As an ‘insider’ working ‘at home’ I faced critical issues because of my position as one of ‘them’ (a Xhosa man sharing the same culture). I suggest in the chapter that as ethnographic researchers, the point of exiting the field site when one has built genuine relationships with informants is always intense with lots of emotions because through us invading their space we automatically become part of their everyday life. My own experience was compounded by two facts; that I continued to visit two families because I had entered unwittingly into a mode of temporary responsibility for the children and because the men became part of my social network. By focusing on two cases of what Posel and Ross (2014) call ‘Ethical Quandaries’, I explore ideas about failure in relation to care for children. This discussion sheds light on the ways that social institutions and the state fail children, and demonstrates how responsibilities are taken and evaded in relation to children. It thus offers a contextual account of ethics rather than the abstracted accounts privileged in ethics protocols.

Chapter Three crafts a framework for the thesis by examining literatures relating to fatherhood, children, and masculinity. It examines different conceptions of fatherhood, particularly the debates on absent versus present fathers in households, as well as theorisation of masculinity with a special focus on South Africa. The chapter reports on different ways African men formulate their masculinity. This is important in explaining how my informants see themselves as men and fathers in relations to the broader society. The chapter suggest that while attachment theory as developed by Bowlby (1969) and others is important, my findings demand new ways of thinking about relationships. I propose an idea of ‘social attachment’ as a means to explore men’s roles and activities in relation to their children. I argue that attachment theory has been guilty of undermining roles played by others in child care in favour of the primary caregiver who is often the mother. I develop my ideas about masculinity through drawing on Paul Willis’ (1977) work on how working class kids get working class jobs is important for my research because it helps to explain the failures of my informants to break for instance poverty cycle generation after generation. While Willis’ (1977) book is based on ethnographic research he conducted among deviant working class school leavers in the industrial town of Hammerton, UK, his argument is useful for thinking about the ways that men I worked with frame their ideals of masculinity in relation to hegemonic masculinities. Willis writes about the young men’s counter-school culture during the last two years of school and the first year of their working life. The first part of the study consists of a “thick” ethnographic description of counter-school culture and behaviour. Their opposition to the school culture which seeks to make them work hard is expressed as style in areas such as dress, smoking, violence and dominance towards girls. Likewise, my informants also developed at an early stage in their schooling careers a culture is resistance towards education which was expressed by joining gang groups, smoking drugs and carrying weapons at school as well as being ‘a ladies man’. Another important work in this regard that I draw on is Bourdieu’s (1973; 1974) views on education especially because his work is regarded in this area to be one of the few coherent accounts of the central role that schools have in reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next. The chapter sets the scene for understanding masculine identities and performances and their relation to fathering and relations with children.

Chapter Four extends this discussion ethnographically. It describes the ideal type of manhood among the Xhosa people. One must admit though that apart from the

initiation (*ukwaluka*) itself and the coming back of *ikwala* (a new man), there are other stages of seniority or progression that have no clear physical markers but are shaped by other factors such as *izilimela* (years one has been initiated/circumcised), place in the male line, and so on. So there is a very fine line sometimes on how to address someone especially if you do not know him.

The discussion of rituals of manhood has potential to be controversial, especially as regards initiation. As a traditionally initiated Xhosa man myself, I acknowledge the need to keep the particulars of this ritual a secret but argue that given that a broad understanding is already in the public domain, it will not harm if I write about it so as to correct misconceptions. Discussion about initiation gives me an entry point in my analysis to talk about a Sizwe, who intermingles with initiated men despite not being initiated. Sizwe, whose father was Zulu and mother Xhosa and who identifies as Zulu, gives us a wonderful example of people's everyday life in urban setting versus how things ought to be in the countryside. His story shows a very talented young man who knows how to play different characters depending on the occasion to a point where he is more like a chameleon. As a classificatory 'boy' (*inkwenkwe*), because he has not been initiated and is not circumcised, he has to play his cards very smart. His story shows us the ways that individuals navigate cultural expectations with dexterity.

Chapter Five focus on fathers' responsibilities and failures. I describe the nature of relationships that young men, many of whom are drug users, have with their fathers, mothers, others, girlfriends, and children. These relationships or lack thereof signify critical turning points in the young men's lives. The men's stories point to the fact that these men had poor relationships with their fathers and some of the mothers are implicated in their drug problems today. The chapter extends discussion of masculine identity by exploring the notion of *udlalani* (a player or womaniser) and the status of the children resulting from the casual encounters characterised by this identity. The chapter concludes that this group of young fathers is by and large not meeting the needs of their children. Most of their children live in Cape Town but there is no regular contact between fathers and children, which is similar to the men Reynolds (1984) wrote about during apartheid. It is not always lack of trying but life is messy to a point where often the men either ruin relationships with their girlfriends or are rejected by the maternal family. The chapter centres on Ta Pat's relationship with Neliswa to demonstrate how masculine performances (including being a player and engaging in criminal activities)

shape both acceptance in peer networks and also shapes women's continued relations with their natal homes. In Neliswa's case it is absolutely critical that she maintains good relationship with her own family should 'something go wrong' in her living arrangements with Ta Pat. This has implications for how children are raised.

Chapter Six argues that theories of bonding need to go beyond mother-infant relationships when adopted in African settings because here in most communities child care is a collective effort. It is for this reason therefore that I am cautious in adopting attachment theory uncritically. I am rather more interested to its social dimensions; particularly the crucial role African fathers ought to play in order to connect their children to their lineages. I maintain in this chapter that the role African men play in their children's lives is huge for it to be dismissed and downplayed as if it does not matter. By performing their role, African fathers enable their children to have a clan name and thus a particular identity and sense of belonging. As we saw in my own father's infidelities, Songezo had to search for him to avoid humiliation of 'not having an identity'. The maternal here is insufficient to practices of cultural belonging. The chapter identifies some of the loopholes in systems that are meant to support young parents and suggests that these have failed therefore new ways are needed which should be developed in consultation with parents themselves to accommodate their needs.

In the concluding chapter, I encapsulate the key findings of this dissertation as well as emphasize how the idea of social attachment helped me to position these findings within the broader anthropological studies on fatherhood and children. As a point of departure, the thesis show that the notion of social attachment as developed and applied in this work is a useful analytical tool but it needs to be employed to accommodate local conditions. The dissertation has sought to demonstrate this by locating men's behaviours within the modes of masculine identity available to them, examining the histories of these, both generally and in relation to specific men, and thinking through their implications for ideas and practices of fathering.

## Chapter Two

### Methodology

#### Introduction

In this chapter I begin by introducing the reader to the events and moments that led to the establishment of Gugulethu. Such a discussion is indeed necessary because it lays the foundation in contextualising the narratives of my informants' parents' struggles to remain in the Cape even after their employment contracts expired. Those resistances paid dividends because in the end men were able to eventually reside with their wives and children in the hostels. I then move to my mixed feelings about entering Gugulethu for the first time in 2008. On one hand I was excited to be in the township, a familiar environment with 'my people', but that was short lived because my first real experience there I witnessed a man being killed by a moving train as he tried to catch a free ride. I return to such events below as I talk more about the meaning of *ukusgcuzwa* (train hitching) as a key marker of a real man in this community. The discussion leads into a description of the tools I used in gathering data for my research.

#### The formation of Gugulethu

According to the City of Cape Town, the first Township in South Africa was established because of the bubonic plague which hit Cape Town in 1901 (2012:12). The apartheid government used this outbreak as an excuse to remove Africans from the city centre. Black Africans were identified as a health hazard and it is estimated that about 5000 people were forcibly moved to Uitvlugt, a state farm, now known as Ndabeni. People were relocated into structures made out of corrugated iron, each accommodating about eight people (ibid). Once more, in 1918 another disease, the Spanish influenza, was used as a reason to move people further away from Ndabeni to Langa. The township of Langa was named by the residents of Ndabeni after Chief Langalibalele<sup>18</sup> (ibid). Langa

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<sup>18</sup> Langa was established in 1923. Like Nyanga, it was one of the many areas in South Africa designated for habitation by African people. Although the name Langa means Sun, the name is actually derived from the name of the Xhosa chief Langalibalele, who was imprisoned on Robben Island in 1873 for rebelling against the Natal government (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/langa>). The chief was also a renowned rainmaker.

became home to thousands of people forcibly relocated from Ndabeni and other areas in Central Cape Town.

Nyanga East, another township designated for blacks, was established in 1948 with 210 houses, as the National Party came to power and few years before the Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950 was promulgated (ibid). This Act was meant to enforce urban segregation along racial lines. An effect of the law was to exclude non-whites from living in the most developed areas, which were restricted to whites. With the Nationalist Party coming to power and formalising the apartheid system, it also ensured that the control of non-white populations became even stronger and more brutal. In terms of successive Acts, commonly known as 'petty apartheid' (as compared with the geopolitical interventions of Separate Development), Africans were not allowed in parks or at the beaches; buses and trains were segregated, as were services (ibid).

In 1955, Nyanga was enlarged to include the settlement of Mau-Mau<sup>19</sup> and by 1958, Nyanga West, now called Gugulethu, was established (City of Cape Town, 2012:12). According to Rebekah Lee (2009:13) Gugulethu was described by the apartheid government as an emergency camp. She argues that Gugulethu was the first African township in Cape Town established under apartheid regime, which contradicts the City's version of the story. Be that as it may, Lee (ibid) reports that "...because Gugulethu was an official township, its first inhabitants were granted the rare privilege of council housing." Houses were awarded only to residents who qualified according to Section 10, which means they had to have lived in Cape Town continuously for more than 10 years. Among many anomalies, the then government named the streets as NYs which stood for "Native Yard". (Strong pressure for the NY terminology to be dropped because of its derogatory and offensive nature resulted in the renaming of streets in 2012).<sup>20</sup> Grandparents and parents of my informants were among the first people to acquire some of these houses in Gugulethu. It was not an easy process to acquire these houses as

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<sup>19</sup> The second phase of Nyanga was completed in 1953 and consisted of 350 dual occupancy units housing 700 families. Residents from the Old Location called this place 'Mau-Mau'. Nyanga consists of eleven townships: Lusaka, KTC – See Henderson, P, PhD Thesis for the politics that transformed this area, Old Location, Maumau, Zwelitsha, Maholweni "Hostels", Black City, White City, Barcelona, Kanana and Europe (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/place/nyanga-township>).

<sup>20</sup> The renaming of streets, airports, parks, national roads, and buildings is a continuous national project which is costing the country millions to address apartheid legacy and honor those who played a significant role in the fight against apartheid. This is by no means a smooth and uncontested process because all that happened in the past forms a significant part of our heritage. Some argue for the preservation of this history while others see it as offensive with other even blaming Mandela by selling black people in his negotiations with whites for liberating the country.

we will see in the following chapter from the life histories and in-depth interviews of my interlocutors.

Gugulethu is located approximately 20 kilometres from Cape Town city centre. Placing Africans as far as possible from the town centre was a strategic move because the distance not only ensured that Africans stay away from white and Coloured reserved areas. The effect was also to keep people far from job opportunities. The distance is costly to its residents because most rely on public transport daily to commute to work. At the time of my research, Gugulethu residents spent roughly R6 (x2) on *iphela* ('cockroach', slang term for minibus taxis) to the main taxi rank/bus terminus where they took another taxi for R12 (x2) to town plus another minibus taxi if one works at the Water Front or Camps Bay on daily basis. This makes it almost impossible for job seekers to continuously search for employment in town. Often Africans rely on kinsmen to help secure employment which makes social networks very important for job seekers. However, as we will see with my informants their networks are very limited, being largely only restricted to their unemployed friends in area. This has been one of the lasting effects of apartheid restrictions. This situation is no fault of their own; people's activities are shaped by local networks, local community politics, and are influenced by criminal acts and gang groupings. Indeed, all my participants were members of those gang groups as school-going children and even today they is not free to go to any section of Gugulethu as that might spark attack from their enemies. Going to school in sections outside their Section 3 where they resided, meant they needed to walk as a group for protection. The threat of violence was often actualised. After the brother of one of the men in my sample, Ntemi, was killed by gang members at home, Ntemi was sent to Umtata in the former Transkei (now Eastern Cape) to continue his education. Sadly, he never completed it.

Since its establishment, Gugulethu has become home to thousands of Africans over the years. My informants represent the fourth generation of urban residents in Cape Town. The population now is reported to be at 98466. Table 1 below, drawn from Census data in 2010, shows that black Africans remain the majority at 97070 followed by Coloured people at 860.<sup>21</sup> More than half of Gugulethu's population now are women and this is in line with what I observed during my field work. This also shows the radical

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<sup>21</sup> While there are very few whites resident in the area (see Table 1), I did meet one white man who lives in Gugulethu and is feared even by hard-core criminals in the area. He is an ex-solder of the apartheid army but refuses to go and live in mostly white areas.



post-apartheid gender shift in urban residence. Apartheid laws had been stringent against African women's residence in cities. While women had always been present in cities and had been instrumental in activism around housing, once influx control laws were abolished, women's residence became more secure.. Almost all the households in which I worked were led by women, with the exception of Ta Pat who owns his own house. Black African women's life expectancy is much better than that of men. In part, the latter is indicative of men's life styles, the ways they express their masculinity, to maintain a particular image despite the dangers involved.

#### **Population group by gender**

Table 1.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Black African	47560	49510	97070
Coloured	331	529	860
Indian or Asian	51	29	80
White	27	17	44
Other	308	106	414
<b>Total</b>	<b>48277</b>	<b>50191</b>	<b>98468</b>

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Table 2 below shows employment figures in Gugulethu. Unemployment is a serious problem in this community as currently recorded at 17883. There is not much difference between men and women's rates of unemployment. This means there is a high possibility for household members to be unemployed at the same time. Interestingly, no statistics are given for persons under the age of 15. Here the assumption is that children of this age or below are still at school but we know that there are many households that are run by children in the absence of parents either due to HIV related deaths or incarceration, and that children perform all kinds of labour, including some that is remunerated.

Much labour is not recorded in Census data. For example, during my field work I have seen a sudden increase in the car wash business in almost every street. For a normal size car they charge between R30 and R45, and bigger cars – SUVs - R60 or more. The men also work as car guards, a very popular practice now in South African cities. My informants charge R20 to look after a car and there is generally no time limit as to how long one can park their car. Because there is limited space between houses, cars are

parked in front of residents' houses which mean the profit is split half with the house owner. Similarly, people put up their stands especially on weekends to sell meat, and other home-made food. These income generating strategies are not always reflected or accounted for in statistical data and therefore making it hard to image how in the adversity people are able to survive. Many of the men in my sample were involved in (informal) car wash and car guarding activities, so the ways that life is sustained in these contexts will be described in the unfolding chapters.

### **Employment status by Gender**

Table 2.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employed	14313	12894	27207
Unemployed	8952	8934	17883
Discouraged work-seeker	1674	2010	3684
Other not economically active	9327	11214	20538
Age less than 15 years	-	-	-
Not applicable	14016	15141	29154
<b>Total</b>	<b>48276</b>	<b>50193</b>	<b>98466</b>

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Table 3 below shows education attainment in Gugulethu by gender. It reveals that at almost every level, women are achieving better than men or staying longer at school. For instance, only 201 men managed to obtain a senior certificate compared to 303. The gender difference might reflect some of the challenges men living in poverty and high crime areas face. Some men might be forced to leave school due to gang violence, unlike women who do not face the same challenges to the same extent. But also men are expected to contribute financially to the household survival or resources. Also interestingly is the number of men attending ABET in Grade 5; 7 and Grade 9 compared to women. High numbers of older men go back to school probable due to inability to secure employment in the absence of any qualification.

**Table 3. Highest educational level by Gender in Gugulethu**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Gade 0	1494	1362	2856
Grade 1 / Sub A	1176	1077	2253
Grade 2 / Sub B	1203	990	2190
Grade 3 / Std 1/ABET 1Kha Ri Gude;SANLI	1134	855	1989
Grade 4 / Std 2	1443	1155	2598
Grade 5 / Std 3/ABET 2	1422	1170	2592
Grade 6 / Std 4	1752	1521	3273
Grade 7 / Std 5/ ABET 3	2250	1962	4212
Grade 8 / Std 6 / Form 1	4017	3894	7911
Grade 9 / Std 7 / Form 2/ ABET 4	3615	3189	6798
Grade 10 / Std 8 / Form 3	4701	5196	9897
Grade 11 / Std 9 / Form 4	5757	7014	12774
Grade 12 / Std 10 / Form 5	9645	11724	21363
NTC I / N1/ NIC/ V Level 2	87	81	168
NTC II / N2/ NIC/ V Level 3	51	30	84
NTC III /N3/ NIC/ V Level 4	33	30	66
N4 / NTC 4	33	24	60
N5 /NTC 5	39	48	84
N6 / NTC 6	45	54	99
Certificate with less than Grade 12 / Std 10	39	36	75
Diploma with less than Grade 12 / Std 10	57	78	138
Certificate with Grade 12 / Std 10	201	303	504
Diploma with Grade 12 / Std 10	411	648	1056
Higher Diploma	351	567	915
Post Higher Diploma Masters; Doctoral Diploma	51	84	138
Bachelors Degree	213	327	546
Bachelors Degree and Post graduate Diploma	66	90	159
Honours degree	54	81	138
Higher Degree Masters / PhD	36	30	69
Other	96	96	192
No schooling	1080	1005	2085
Unspecified	-	-	-
Not applicable	5718	5466	11184
<b>Total</b>	<b>48279</b>	<b>50190</b>	<b>98469</b>

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Primary school is compulsory in South Africa. There is not much difference in educational status between men and women from Grade 0 to Grade 7. But gender difference is quite evident in higher school grades as shown by those who managed to reach matric. There could be two reasons for this difference. Firstly, as mentioned above, men are generally expected to contribute to household income early, usually assisting

their fathers. This might lead to early school drop-out. The second factor is men's involvement in gang groupings as alluded to earlier. As is the case with many of my informants, when their group members for their own personal reasons decide to leave school, friends have no choice but to follow suit for their own safety.

Table 4 below shows the dwelling types that exist in Gugulethu today. Many of the people who live in Gugulethu have formal housing and their neighbourhood is serviced by the municipality. As mentioned earlier, Gugulethu is surrounded by informal settlements such as Kanana, Barcelona, Europe, and *Kwakhikhi*. It is not surprising therefore that approximately 29157 people live in informal dwellings. There is also a high number of people living in 'backyards' (informal housing built in the yards of formal stands). Most of my informants in this study fall within this category.

#### Type of main dwelling

Table 4.

	Urban area	Tribal or Traditional area	Farm	Total
Formal housing - serviced	55833	-	-	55833
Formal housing backyard	3642	-	-	3642
Informal backyard	4332	-	-	4332
Informal dwelling (shack; not in backyard; e.g. in an informal/squatter settlement or on a farm)	29160	-	-	29157
Unspecified/other/N/A	5139	-	-	5139
<b>Total</b>	<b>98106</b>	-	-	<b>98103</b>

Stats SA 2010 Census

Lest it seem that I overemphasise violence and danger, **Appendix B** contains statistics on crime which clearly shows that crime has been consistently on the rise in Gugulethu. Despite massive under-reporting of crime, the data are clear; life here is precarious and dangerous. Crimes that are classified as contact crimes (crimes against the person) between April 2012 and March 2013 show that there were 2557 such cases. This category involved sexual crimes, attempted murder, assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, common assault, common robbery, and robbery with aggravating circumstances. Another grouping known as contact-related crimes which comprise of arson and malicious injury to property is reported to at 641. The third category known as property-related crimes is at 1141. These involve burglary at residential and non-residential premises, motor vehicle and motorcycle theft, theft out of or from motor vehicles and stock-theft. Drug-related crime on its own is reported at 1649 between the

same years (April 2012 to March 2013). Drug-related crimes have been consistently on the rise since April 2004 and 2005 when it was reported at 324.

All these are the sort of criminal activities my informants have taken part in at some stage. Their histories of criminal involvement and incarceration varied. The most arrested man in my study had been to prison at least 8 times so far – Ta Pat, with his son, and nephews following on his footsteps. The men thus have a complex relationship with the state owing in part to the structural violence that underpins their life experience; their own histories of violence and crime; and the ways that the state has become entwined with their families, as I show in the following chapters.

To return briefly to the crime statistics by way of situating the study. A positive figure is a dramatic decrease in neglect and ill-treatment of children from 47 in 2004 – 2005 to 8 in April 2012 to March 2013 period. We do know that there is considerable under-reporting of crimes against children, so these figures should however be read with caution. We do not know how many children have been admitted to government funded institutions which might be a contributory factor to the sudden drop because the early childhood development sector is quite wide and relatively new in the country.

These figures paint a comparable picture to what I observed in Gugulethu during my fieldwork. They depict an environment where young and unemployed men must try to survive daily hardships as long as they can and where crime forms an integral part of some of their struggles. It is an environment characterised by a history of state violence, ongoing problems in policing, and high rates of interpersonal violence. Indeed, during my fieldwork I witnessed two murders. Locally it is held that in the absence of facilities for youth, it becomes very difficult to keep them away from doing ‘wrong things’. While there are other explanations more deeply rooted in political-economic histories which will become apparent in the course of the dissertation, it is true that there is little provision for the young. Let me give an example from my own experience. Because Gugulethu became my home away from home, I joined a gym at the Sport Complex in 2011 and again in 2012, but it felt like a waste of my time because there are no facilities inside. The two treadmills available have never worked during my time. The gym charges R50 per month but this was a heavy for unemployed persons. Of the twelve men I worked closely with, only Ntemie played soccer towards the end of 2012. He took this decision because his friends were being ‘hunted’ by taxi men for their participation in gang fights and he wanted to absent himself from the social arena. All the other men in

the study are not involved in any physical fitness training and all reported boredom as a key feature of their everyday lives.

### Entering my field site

I was excited to go to Gugulethu because I was looking forward to being with ‘my people’, the people who speak my language, likely to cook familiar food, enjoy similar music to mine and many other things such as shared ideals of generosity. However, the other side of me felt anxious because I did not know about the area. I did not know the people and I was extremely anxious. When I started this field work in Gugulethu in November 2008 I used public transport. Public transport is very useful in learning about an unfamiliar area but it has limitations in areas where every street corner has a group of men waiting for targets to *ukubakhubuza* (to pickpocket). Taxis during the day move slowly between Mowbray to Gugulethu so I had to use Manenberg taxis which would drop me off at Nyanga Junction and then I would take *iphela* for R5 at the time (now R6). ‘Coloured taxis’, unlike taxis owned by amaXhosa, do not wait to be full before setting off. They pick and drop off passengers throughout the day. On my first trip, as I was waiting at Nyanga Junction, trains were coming and going. All of a sudden people were screaming and shouting trying to get the driver’s attention. We all got out of the car only to witness a young person being dragged along the railway lines. He died before the train could stop. Apparently he was trying *ukuthawuza/ukusgcuzza* (to catch a lift in a train between its carriages). It was a horrific scene which remained in my mind for a while until I witnessed more brutal deaths in Gugulethu.

I continued with my journey to Sizwe’s place. After getting off from *iphela* I had to walk in a passage which I later learnt that it used to be a trap for apartheid police. Residents would dig a wide hole and cover it with zinc and spread sand on top. When police chase them on their cars they would be trapped there and that gave residents some time to hide women and children or anything that might send them to jail. Such reminders of a violent past that has shaped a raw present feature large in people’s imaginaries.

Sizwe’s parents’ house is on a fairly large plot surrounded by a brick wall. There is a driveway and a garage door to the left. The house is on the right as you come in through the space where they used to have gate across the driveway. There is a pathway

between the garage and the main house which leads to the back yard where Sizwe and his girlfriend Minazana live. The other 'bungalow' at the back is for Beauty, one of Sizwe's sisters. The other door on the flat goes to Asanda's room, Sizwe's nephew. Sizwe's room is a good size and has a double bed and dressing table on the one side and on the side where the door is there is a living room area with two couches, a chair, a wall unit with a television set, a DVD player, and hi-fi. The room has a pre-paid electrical meter. The room was very dark, with only one window which did not let much light in and fresh air. The door was closed and a group of five men were smoking dagga and tik (methamphetamine, a relatively newly introduced and very dangerous addictive drug). Soon after I entered, three of them left the room and later I learnt that they thought I was either a police spy or social worker.

That Sizwe and his sister had their own backyard dwellings is not unusual. A large housing backlog and growing population mean that almost in every yard in Gugulethu you will find *hokkies* or *bungaloms* (backyard informal housing structures either built by zinc or wood and sometimes out of plastic and cardboard material) attached to the main house or scattered all over the yard, leaving very little space for children to play. As a result, children play their games on the street, dodging speeding cars. The backyard rooms are safe spaces for recreation, including drug and alcohol usage, sex and criminal activities. Usually parents allow their older children to build these *hokkies* so that they can have privacy because the main houses are quite small. Sometimes these *hokkies* host kin members and tenants who pay rent. Because marriages are rare for girls these days or someone is divorced, girls also erect their own *hokkies* at home to have some privacy.<sup>22</sup> Beauty, Sizwe's sister, for instance built her own bungalow and she lived with her boyfriend at home. They lived relatively independently of the residents of the main house; although, as I will show, childcare was spread across residents of a number of the structures in the yard, adults remained responsible for providing their own food.

One of the key visible features of my informants is hunger. Poverty can be seen on their faces and lack of energy. Occasionally I would sit in the kitchen for a chat when someone prepared a meal (which was rare) or washing dishes or mopping the floor. People reacted differently to my presence in the kitchen. Some would hide the little they had inside the bin, a sign of shame about one's poverty, while others saw this as a chance

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<sup>22</sup> Young men used to be the only ones entitled to live (relatively) independently of the main household, particularly once they had been initiated. There has been a shift in the right to backyard living.

to show me their daily struggle to put food on the table. Sometimes I would buy *vetkoek* (in isiXhosa, *amagwinya*, deep fried doughballs) for children but often those would be shared by elders. It pains one to watch people going for an entire day without any proper meal or strategizing around who to feed and how. For example, it was always interesting to see motherly love from Sizwe's mother when they run out of food. She would hide some of her own food she got from her granddaughter, Asanda, and give it secretly to her son Sizwe. Her actions went against the grain of local ideas about who should receive food, and were a clear indication that no matter how strained their relationship, she still favoured him.

Gugulethu becomes a buzz on weekends, with youth wearing expensive beautiful clothes attending funerals or *beyozimamela* (to enjoy themselves) in *shebeens* and taverns. Young girls become extremely beautiful on weekends even the ones who are still at school or unemployed especially in and around a popular local restaurant. It is not difficult for young beautiful girls to buy these expensive clothes because men offer to take care of their needs. Young women have different names for the men they have connections. Some men are called *iminista* of transport (transport minister – these men are accepted as lovers because one has a car to take the woman with her friends whenever she wants to go), *iminista* of finance (finance minister – he is accepted as a lover because of his rich wallet and this goes back to the Xhosa idiom that says *ubuhle bendoda zinkomo nokufuma kwempokotho yayo* – man's handsomeness is his cows and the warmth of his wallet – being rich). I return to this in later chapters. Of course this is not something new. Izugbara's work (2012: 1345) among female sex workers in Nairobi, Kenya, examines "strategies for recruiting and retaining regular male partners". In this study participants suggested that "the risk of contracting HIV, being beaten, raped, or gang raped was lower with regular clients than with casual strangers" (2012:1346). The men in my sample were not able to participate in this weekend public display but nevertheless cast themselves as 'players', as I demonstrate in Chapter Five. As the data presented below show, the young men share many characteristics with the broader demographic profile of Gugulethu.



## The Sample

Participants: Name, & Age in 2011	Residential Status	Education Completed	Language proficiency	Employment Regularity 2011-13	Employment Type 2011-13	Income per week	Current Relationship Status	Prison	Drgus use
Sizwe (35)	Backyard Flat	7	isiZulu; isiXhosa; Afrikaans; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc & STC	Carguard & Delivery	R120	Girlfriend	8	Regular user: Tik, dagga, Mandrax, alcohol
Vuyo (35)	Backyard hokkie	7	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; limited English; tsotsitaal	Unemployed			Girlfriend, casual partners	6	Regular user: Tik, dagga, alcohol
Playboy (30)	Backyard Flat	7	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; limited English; tsotsitaal	Unemployed	Cell-phone repairer	R100	Girlfriend, casual partners	4	Reguler user: Tik, dagga, alcohol
Thando (20)	Backyard hokkie	6	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc	Carguard	R120	Casual partners	2	Regular user: Tik, dagga, Mandrax, alcohol
Shayela (24)	Parent house	6	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; limited English; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc	Carguard	R120	Girlfriend, casual partners	1	Regular user: Tik, dagga, alcohol
Abna (30)	Backyard hokkie	8	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; limited English; tsotsitaal	STE	Security	R555	Wife	2	None
Abee (33)	Backyard hokkie	8	isiXhosa; Afrikaans; English; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc & STC	Cashier, dustbin washer	R1 500	Girlfriend, casual partners	3	Regular user: Alcohol, dagga, cigarettes
Ntemie (22)	Backyard hokkie	9	isiXhosa; limited English; tsotsitaal	Unemployed			Casual partners	1	Regular user: Dagga, tik, alcohol
Rashidi (27)	Backyard hokkie	7	isiXhosa; limited English; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc	Carguard	R120	Girlfriend, casual partners	2	Regular user: Tik, dagga
Ta Pat (44)	Own house	5	isiXhosa; limited English; tsotsitaal	Unemployed			Wife	8	None
Mabhanti (29)	Backyard hokkie	7	seSotho; isiXhosa; English; Afrikaans; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc	Carguard	R120	Casual partners	7	Regular user: tik, dagga, alcohol
Siyabulela (34)	Backyard hokkie	7	isiXhosa; English; Afrikaans; tsotsitaal	Ad hoc & STE	Cleaner	500	Girlfriends, casual partners	1	Regular user: Alcohol, dagga, cigarettes

Short term employment  
= STE

The men in my sample are between the ages of 20 and 45. Many of them are within the category youth according to South Africa's classification. All the children in the study were still below age 12 when I began research, and mostly receive the government child subsidy – 'the grant' – which in some households is the only reliable source of income, provided it is renewed on time. With the exception of Sihle whose mother died and Anathi, Vuyo's son, all other children live with their maternal parents. Only one couple,

Sizwe and Minazana, stayed together throughout my field work (although Minazana had other boyfriends and would occasionally leave to stay with them, leaving Sizwe and children alone). Others, such as those of Vuyo, Ntemie, Shayela and Player, only stayed together for a short time before the girlfriend and child/ren returned to their more permanent place, usually the woman's natal kin. The other men in the sample either had irregular contact with their girlfriends and children or not at all, a topic I explore in more detail below and demonstrate ethnographically in later chapters. The majority of the men in this study depend on their mothers for the very basics in life such as food, clothes and assistance with their children. In the following chapters I explore what this dependence on their parents' means for the men. To do this I draw on the idea of "waithood" as proposed by Alcinda Honwana (2012). Her work in Southern Africa is very useful in thinking about the conditions young people find themselves lately and what this means for their future and future of their children.

**Father-child relationship table**

<b>Fathers Name &amp; Age(in 2011)</b>	<b>Child Name &amp; Age</b>	<b>Current Relationship with Childs mother</b>	<b>Child's Residence</b>	<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Child Grant</b>	<b>Who Manages Grant?</b>
Sizwe (35)	Njabu (30); Yaya (2)	Together	Parents/Paternal grandmother	Support	Yes	Father
Vuyo (35)	Anathi (9); Asiphe (4)	Apart; Together	Maternal; mother	Does not support	Yes	Mother
Playboy (30)	Nomfusi (7); Anam (3); Eyethu (14 months). Noxolo (10)	Together	Paternal	Intermittent	Yes	Parents
Thando (20)	Sisiphe (3)	Apart	Maternal	Does not support	Yes	Mother
Shayela (24)	Lihle & Buhle 6 (Twins); Azola (15 months); Amahle (died at 1 mnth)	Together	Maternal/mother	Intermittent	Yes	Mother
Abna (30)	Masande (4); Odwa (2)	Together	Parents	Support	Yes	Parents
Abee (33)	Iviwe (3)	Together	Mother	Intermittent	Yes	Mother
Ntemie (22)	Sesethu (5)	Apart	Father	Support	Yes	Father
Rashidi (27)	Inathi (6); Inga (2)	Together	Mother	Intermittent	Yes	Mother
Ta Pat (44)	Abongile (19); Nanhla (15); Elam (12); Aludwe (8); Ndoda (5); Avuyile (20 mnths); Preg again	Together	Parents & Maternal	Intermittent	Yes	Maternal grandparents ; Father
Mabhanti (29)	Noluvuyo (11)	Apart	Mother	Support	Yes	Mother
Siyabulela (34)	Sihle (11); Asenathi (3)	Apart	Paternal (Sihle); Maternal (Asenathi)	Intermittent (Sihle); Does not support (Asenathi)	Yes	Mother

The above table also shows that most of the children depend on the state through its Child Support Grant in the inability or failure of their fathers to support them continuously. This heavy dependence on the state pose challenges and I suggest in the thesis that the state heavy involvement in the care for children requires a re-consideration of the concepts of fatherhood and responsibility. I believe that if the state plays such an integral part in children's well-being, this pose a new challenge on our definition of fatherhood at least in the context of South Africa. Most of the men never paid or completed payment for impregnating their girlfriends as such the majority of the

children use their mothers' surnames. As per cultural practice in this community, such children 'belong to' (are affiliated with) their maternal households. I explore in Chapter Six the implications of the failure to pay 'compensation', otherwise known in the community as *imali yesisu* or *intlawulo*.

Some of the fathers in my sample face real challenges because maternal families have become gate keepers, making it difficult or even impossible for the father to see his child. In some cases it is the father who does not make any effort to see his child. The table shows that the majority of the men in my sample are able to see their children even though the frequency of these interactions depends on many other factors such as the quality of relationships between the father and the mother, the location where the mother and the child live, how the father is seen by her family, and whether the parents are still together.

Generally, the men in this study did not contribute consistently to the upkeep of their children. Only one father, Mabhanti, among the unmarried men has been consistent in supporting his daughter by sending remittances to her mother. Ntemie lives with his daughter and is helped by his mother and grandmother, as is the case with most of the other men. Only two men in the study, Sizwe and Abna, do not have casual sex partners. All the other men engage in casual sex with female friends even if in a stable relationship. The significance of this is explored in more detail in later chapters.

## **Reflections on Method**

Archie Mafeje (1996:26) maintained that the term methodology "is one of the most abused terms in social science discourse." This is because the term is frequently used interchangeable to mean both the processes we follow as well as the tools we employ in conducting research. However, for Mafeje the term has a deeper theoretical meaning. For him it refers to the fundamental "choices we make as social scientists in knowledge" production (ibid). By drawing on Mafeje's work, it is important for me to mention the fact that the socio-political environment at the time he raised concerns was different. Trained as an anthropologist, Mafeje was very critical of his discipline within the African continent. He rightfully suggested that for the discipline to be relevant it

should either redefine itself or close down because of the manner in which non-African anthropologists were researching “others” (black Africans) and framing their analysis.<sup>23</sup>

Similar to Mamphela Ramphele, Mafeje was also a political activist which in some ways might have influenced his engagement with his informants. It is no secret that Mafeje saw anthropology as a racist discipline because of its Western origins and its methodological tools in studying the lives of “others”. While Mafeje and I share much in common, including our origins in the Eastern Cape, the challenges I faced in the field when conducting my research, both methodologically – site selection, sampling decisions, how best to handle ethical challenges as they erupt in the field - and culturally – being an insider for instance -, are different from those Mafeje had to overcome as an African scholar. South Africa attained democracy in 1994. Although politically everyone is free, economically it is only a few especially among the black majority.

Methodology is usually employed to indicate the conceptual and philosophical assumptions that justify the use of particular research methods. It helps us to understand not only the products of scientific inquiry but also the process itself (Winston, 1995:38). According to Saunders (1997:3) research methodology “involves a multistage process which one follows in order to undertake and complete the research project.” For instance, a “quantitative researcher embarks on a voyage of verification constantly testing concepts and hypotheses against data” (Bryman, 1984:84). My study is “inherently exploratory” as I embarked on a “voyage of exploration” (Bryman, 1984:84). This is the opposite of the traditional chronological model to which quantitative researchers subscribe. It is for this reason that research design is often seen as a one-directional sequence of steps, from problem formulation to conclusions.

Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive; meaning the researcher relies heavily on interpretation of his data. Throughout my thesis I offer “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of the behaviour of the men I worked with, their context and the interpretations others offered, so that their narratives become meaningful to an outsider. These “thick descriptions” take both historical as well as contemporary understandings of the phenomenon under exploration very seriously. I put these in conversation with my

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<sup>23</sup> He wrote during apartheid’s ruthless racial discrimination. Mafeje himself was going through a personal battle in his appointment as a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town which was later reversed due to political interference by the apartheid government.

own personal accounts as a way of creating connection to the extent and nature of the issues I deal with in the thesis. The value of ethnographic data lies in its ability, through its methods, to take us deeper inside people complicated lives and the histories and social relations that shape them. This takes time. Informants need time to build trust and feel comfortable around us before they could begin to share sensitive information on themselves. The forms of life of the men I am describing in the thesis is characterised by sensitive issues such as casual sex in the presence of HIV/AIDs, imprisonment, and attempts to reconstruct lives in a very unstable environment. Their narratives raise serious concerns about the fathering practices one is reporting on. Although this is a small sample, as is often the case with ethnographic research, it reveals much about the social context in which relationships are formed and often crumble. I show in later chapters that people's uncertainties play a big role in different and rather unusual forms relationships are handled by my informants.

In conducting and subsequently writing up research material, questions of selectivity and subjectivity are always contentious. This is even more so in ethnographic work because of the nature of our studies which give preference to small samples so as to gain better knowledge about the phenomenon under exploration. Sean Jones (1990:63) remarks that, if anthropology acknowledges that by nature human beings are selective and subjective, then ethnography is succeeding in its mission which is to document lived experiences. In narrating their life stories, informants are sometimes accused of being selective of which stories, events or aspects of their past share with the researcher and which ones to leave out. The value of doing ethnographic work is the number of opportunities a researcher get in going over the told stories with a critical eye and keep going back for more clarity. Certainly, I had such instances in my field work. For example, one of the couples I worked with the longest - from 2008 to 2013, Minazana (who was 28 years old when I began research) and Sizwe, (then aged 35), the father of her child Njabu.. Minazana was asked how many children she had. Her answer was always two children. But one afternoon in 2009, in a casual conversation as we were sitting on the stoop I asked her how many children does she have and how many she was planning to have, both questions posed to her at the same time. She told me that she lost her first born because he was run over by a truck in her village in Eastern Cape. This was the first time we learnt about this child. On this day she was reflecting on her mothering skills, giving the impression that she has not been a 'good' mother. She had abandoned her seven year old daughter in Khayelitsha with neighbours when she started cohabiting

with Sizwe.<sup>24</sup> As is clear from this, the context in which conversations take place is important, hence whenever appropriate I will describe the context in which the testimony was made in our conversations. Although my focus is on men, I draw on women's accounts about their own lives or those of their boyfriends/husbands. I deliberately do this because I believe that one can never discuss fatherhood practices without reference to motherhood, hence it was important for me to interview mothers where they were available. Besides, fathers formulate their own lives around motherhood influences and interactions, therefore one cannot separate the two.

In 1984 when Pamela Reynolds interviewed fathers who were not allowed to live with their wives and children in Cape Town, fathers expressed their loneliness and desires to have their children live with them. Unfortunately, we can never know how such relationships between fathers and children might have turned out for us to make comparison with the current generation of fathers. The current generation has this opportunity to build strong relationships with their children. However, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the young men face unique challenges which has crippled them to even start their own homesteads.

### **Site selection**

The initial study on which my project is linked selected Gugulethu as its site because it is one of the Western Cape sites for the multi-country study PMTCT<sup>25</sup> Effectiveness in Africa: Research and Linkages to Care (PEARL) conducted by the Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Unity (IDEU) in the School of Public Health at UCT. The PEARL study collected clinical data to determine PMTCT drug coverage in Gugulethu and also conducted a community survey of households with children less than two years of age. In formulating this project though I was not interested in studying people who might be affected or infected by a specific disease, but rather in exploring people's everyday lives. Insofar as disease forms part of that life it has been explored as part of the whole. This project sought to explore the forms of life of young men living in

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<sup>24</sup> Ross (2010) notes that whether a child is able to remain with his/her mother frequently depends on the response a woman's new partner has to her prior relationship history. There are complex negotiations around the future of the child in a maternal relationship. These are shaped by prevailing ideas of masculinity and its intersections with responsibility (as I show in Chapter Five), as much as by women's desires and needs.

<sup>25</sup> PMTCT stands for Prevention of Mother to Child (HIV) Transmission

poverty and, most particularly, how they incorporate or exclude relationships with children and the mothers of their children.<sup>26</sup>

I have already pointed out in Chapter One that this research was triggered, among other things, by fascinating conversations I had with the informants that highlighted challenges faced by unmarried fathers in their attempts to involve themselves in their babies' lives. For example, during an interview a baby's mother expressed her frustration about the treatment her baby's father was receiving from her own mother:

*The other thing that upsets me [is that] my mother wants money. When [the baby's father] comes here she demands money, if he doesn't have money he must not come here at home to see the baby. If someone has damaged<sup>27</sup> a woman from this home he must come here with money. Now when he doesn't have the money she will not have [him] in this home, especially *amakwerekwere* [a derogatory name for foreign nationals] she really does not want them here at home (Interview, 3 June 2009).*

For me such challenges pointed to complex issues in this community. The initial Infants' Project helped me to make connections with a number of men and families which became useful in recruiting new men for this study. In Gugulethu it is very important to know and avoid hot spot areas. The people who became my friends protected me against any potential harm but I still needed to be vigilant all the time. Certainly, the community at large was very helpful in alerting me to dangers, especially with gang fighting; they would send me text messages and that helped a lot.<sup>28</sup>

I soon established good connection with Sizwe's family, I felt comfortable to go any time without making appointments even if Sizwe is not around, I felt welcome. I first met Sizwe in November 2008 when we started working with his girlfriend, Minazana, who was recruited into the Infants' Project. I recruited him to my study and he agreed to work with us and since then we became friends. I came to learn that Sizwe's home is a centre of smoking drugs and sometimes they also sell them to make a living though often they also use even the profit. This has led Sizwe and Minazana into trouble with a few people who trusted them. My friends were of the view that one cannot fully enjoy life if

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<sup>26</sup> Poverty is rife in Gugulethu. In 2001, sixty two percent of households in Gugulethu lived on less than R380 per person per month (Strategic Development Information & GIS, 2010), and not much has changed since then as we have seen in the unemployment levels described earlier in this chapter.

<sup>27</sup> Among the Xhosas once a man impregnates a woman out of wedlock he needs to pay the woman's family for damaging their daughter. In the past the payment was in the form of cows but now it is mostly paid in monetary form. The money is meant to contribute to feeding the child and also as a means of compensation to her family.

<sup>28</sup> During the Infants Project, both female field work assistants from Gugulethu were mugged. All recording tapes, bags, note pads, mobile phones, jewellery including a wedding ring were taken from them. We reported the incident to the police but we never heard from them and we never recovered any of the items. So when I started my field work I was very aware of the dangers I was exposed to.



he does not drink or take part in drug usage. At one point some of the participants also asked me to purchase *tik* (methamphetamine) and give it to them to sell for me. I refused outright and never entertained any form of engagement in criminal activities.<sup>29</sup> I talk more on these issues and their implications for me in the field in later chapters.

## Data collection tools

The basic research method I used for gathering information is participant-observation as formulated in ethnographic exploration. Ethnographic methodology is emergent in nature and therefore required that I become flexible. There were instances where I needed to respond with new ideas and methods as the need arose. To gain a better understanding on men's views on fatherhood, I spent as much time as possible with the men selected as participants in the study. I believe that the term participant observer in itself has negative connotations because it gives the impression that the researcher just goes to the field to 'observe' what the actors are saying or doing. For me, I fully participated in their activities as far as they invited me and insofar as these excluded criminal activities. As such being a participant observer was very useful to me because it provided critical moments to obtain more insights on how the young fathers feel about their children, their behaviours toward them, their relationship with the legal system (including conflicts over support and having to attend court cases) and how they lived their daily lives through *skarreling*. Ross (2010:108) argues that *skarreling* "...suggests a frantic search for life's basic necessities, the use of many tactics, a sense of haste and trickery. It involves living by one's wits." My informants use terms such as *ukudidiza* or *ukuzama* (to try their luck) when they go to the carwash or around this popular restaurant in the hope of getting money. As shown above, most of them are quite fluent in English, and Afrikaans, the dominant languages in the Western Cape Province, alongside isiXhosa. In this kind of work if you are shy you will lose potential clients. Men cultivate public personas of bravado. Conflicts and fights erupt any moment over cars; who should look after which cars or wash which cars. Car owners do not know that once the car guard take a deposit, they go home or to Sizwe's place for a smoke and no one will be looking after your car. Consequently, many people have experienced losing personal

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<sup>29</sup> Often people would come with stolen items, like electric appliances, wedding rings, cell phones, clothes, and many more, selling them very cheaply but I never bought anything, refusing to participate in an illegal economy.

items in their cars. Participant observation gave me first-hand experience in all their dealings.

One should mention though that even though the use of in-depth observational technique may help the researcher to go beyond some of the problems associated with qualitative research, the technique has its own weaknesses. One particular problem with in-depth observational studies is their reliance on small samples which inevitably means that making broad statements about a population becomes impossible. But these detailed accounts of everyday life are essential in helping those in power to understand larger issues such as crime, the so-called absent fathers, domestic violence and how best to design programmes intended to assist families. In fact, big surveys need to investigate the extent of known problems rather than being a thump sack and ethnographic research is best suited to identify such key issues. In the public discourse, the current image of black fathers is that of an uncaring ‘sperm donor’, fathering children without care and abandoning the children’s mothers, and even more disturbingly, as rapists. There is very little attention to the contexts in which men forge their lives or the ways that their relationships are shaped by historical forces.

Observations were supplemented by structured and semi-structured in-depth interviews. I kept detailed field notes for all my informal conversations, structured observations, and documented life histories of the men-children’s recent and current experiences. I also enjoyed “hanging-out” with fathers especially on weekends as these interactions gave me a lot of insight about each father’s life from his friends in a more relaxed and ‘natural’ setting. Only two rituals were performed during my field work. It was both *imbeleko* from different families. *Imbeleko* is the slaughtering of a sheep to introduce a new born baby to the ancestors<sup>30</sup> (See Chapter One for more details and contradictions). I also accompanied fathers to health facilities and courts when they invited me to do so. I gave all my participants small diaries and encouraged them to write their experiences but this never materialised. After about a week or two when I wanted

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<sup>30</sup> However, I should indicate that the purpose of *imbeleko* is not clear to many people among the amaXhosa themselves. Elders in my village told me that *imbeleko* started long before Europeans arrived in South Africa and demanded changes in the way indigenous people lived their lives. They say a sheep or goat, depending to what was available to that particular family, was slaughtered so that its skin could be *sisukene* (the process of softening an animal skin) so that the new born could have a blanket. They say new born babies were introduced to ancestors by talking *emaxhantini*<sup>30</sup> (an elder speaking at the kraal’s entrance) and ask for their protection for the new-born.

to see what they have written I was either told the diary was missing, accusing children for losing it or nothing had been written on it.

I also conducted focus group discussions with fathers to provide a platform to share their experiences and beliefs, to tease out issues raised during one-on-one sessions, reflect and challenge each other's opinions on fathering. The organisation of focus group discussions was very challenging because most of the men wash cars and also work as parking marshals at a popular tavern during the day and on weekends. So finding a suitable time was always challenging. The difficulties to organise group discussions came as a surprise to me because I had thought that getting unemployed men in one place would be easy. This means people have other commitments so as researchers we need to respect their needs. We had to settle for cold and rainy days between Mondays and Thursdays because they normally stay indoors when its raining with no cars to wash. Another challenge for me was to try and plan these group discussions when my wife is in Cape Town so that she could cook for us. My own masculinity emerged because I did not want to be seen by them doing work coded female. My wife's meals were very popular among the men. So much so that, although they now know that my field work is complete, they still try to convince me to conduct more group discussions so that she can cook for them. In addition to these group discussions, I had a number of in-depth interviews with other community elders including traditional healers, church leaders, political activists, and a wide range of community elders, mostly women. I also employ some of Reynolds' techniques to collect data particularly her method of mapping circles of care which she developed in her work with student political activists. The conceptual frame for the study is thus made up of the recall and documentation of the experience of having been fathered and of being fathers in relation to vital aspects of life including (1) the character of the family over time; (2) mobility and change in emotional bonds; and (3) fluctuations in the size and membership of households over space and time.

All the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa, the language of both the informants and I. The two isiZulu and seSotho-speaking men speak fluent isiXhosa; they have fully assimilated into the community. Often in our conversations English and Afrikaans words were used in sentences. Most of the interviews were recorded after gaining permission from the informants and some of the casual conversations where I felt the conversation have some relevance to the study. The use of a tape recorder was explained to the participants before each session and they gave permission. There was

never a refusal to this request. All sound files were then transcribed and translated by either myself or an experienced Xhosa speaker who was paid for providing this valuable service. Furthermore, most of the interviews were conducted in the houses of the informants, and sometimes in my car due to noise from neighbours which is impossible to control in zinc structures. It was rare to be able to finish an interview without any interruptions from friends and neighbours.

### ***Reflections on being a man interviewing women***

To conduct research on women participants as a man is tricky. When it is done correctly it can yield rich data but sometimes it can be dangerous with male partners suspecting wrong doings. It was essential that I remain careful at all times in order to avoid gossip and accusations that I might be having affairs with my informants. To cover my back, I always had a female assistant accompanying me to the women's houses until neighbours got used to us during the initial study on infants. One of the primary researchers on the Infants Project was a young white woman. Early in our field work for that project it became clear that some of the mothers were not comfortable to have a white researcher visiting them regularly in their homes. Neighbours kept asking questions about her regular visits, which raised suspicions about the women's health status. Rather than losing our mothers from the study, we asked if they would be comfortable with me taking over and they were happy with that suggestion. I had the advantage because we speak the same language and I am black. However, being a man also had its own limitations even for me. The women had their boyfriends and so my frequent visits in their homes when they were alone could have been interpreted differently, so the presence of a female assistant normalised my presence. I was able to build trust with the women to a point where we were able to openly talk about any topic in our interviews. In fact, they seemed to feel even more comfortable to share their stories with a man who showed interest in them. At times I got the impression that they felt empowered to teach one of the men about issues they wouldn't normally talk about with a man such as graphic details on giving birth. We covered a whole range of issues, ranging from their sex life, labour, birth, boyfriends, witchcraft, HIV, rituals, and many more topics. The present study is thus informed by deep immersion in the worlds of women, some of whom are mothers to children born of relationships with the key participants in my study of fatherhood.

### *Young men talking fathering*

When I started my field work I was not a father. Looking back to that situation I think I was a bit selfish towards my informants in that I was not only an unqualified person to ask them about fathering but also I starved them about my love life. For a long time they did not know anything about my girlfriend whom I married in 2010. This lack of openness on my side came back to haunt me because my friends felt they needed to organise girlfriends for me in their area. This was done to make me feel at home by creating a sense of connectedness through love. It is not something unusual for young men to do in black communities for a new man in the area. Sometimes men do it to test if you know or have love experience. Should you happen *ukuba manwunywe* (be accepted by a girl), she would be secretly asked about your performance in bed. Good feedback from her will improve your social standing as a man in the community especially with women who might have an interest. But if the feedback is negative, *usisifede* ('he is weak') you become a laughing stock. I noticed new faces who were too friendly towards me sometimes and this became even more so when I bought myself a second hand car. The car raised my social status as a man. I later learnt that some of the girls were invited with the hope that I would express myself to them which I never did. I then realised that I needed to come clean about my love life.

Some men in our group discussions challenged me. Instead of answering my questions, they wanted to test my own knowledge about fathering. Specifically, two men were rebelling to discuss a topic with someone who was not a father at the time. Their reaction was quite interesting to me considering that I was also fathered and had contributed immensely in babysitting my siblings. But out of respect of my participants I could not respond in this way as that might have been seen as a sign of disrespect. Instead I explained to them that these conversations would help me become a better father when the time comes and, given that we had just got married, we did not feel that we were ready to be parents.<sup>31</sup> It took support from other men in our group of six to convince them that we should continue with our topic and I should be allowed to continue asking

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<sup>31</sup> Our agreement was to have our first child in 2013 and that is exactly what we did. This does not mean though that we did not have challenges. As a newly married *makoti* (wife), my wife needed to prove that she is worth it by giving birth. By the end of 2011 she was feeling the pressure because in some corners other married women were beginning to gossip about her, saying she is barren (*lidlolo akazali*). The problem we created by our decision to wait this long is that none of our family members or even my parents knew about this decision because we did not see the need to discuss such personal matters with other people.

my questions about fathering. They gave up and we were able to have a fruitful discussion afterwards.

A similar debate also arose in relation to male initiation practices, which became an important focus of my study. Two fathers did not feel they needed to explain to me what is involved in this cultural practice. Their argument was that as a Xhosa man who has been initiated “*ebublanti*”<sup>32</sup> (in the kraal) I should know the processes. I had to explain to them the duties of my position as a researcher that I am curious to know *their* understanding of these cultural practices and their meanings.

Furthermore, the use of language was also interesting because even though we speak the same language when they used their township *lingo* I did not have a clue sometimes. At times men would use *tsotsital* only known by them and the people who live with them. The use of this language was a clear marker for me that I was an outsider in their context. There is a specific language men use when they plan a robbery, such as *etheshweni* (literally means work but here is used to refer to crime-related activity), *idulasi* (items received from robbery), *ingcosi/imedi/umntwana* (all terms refer to an attractive young girl), *ndifunushaya ama-5* (I want to have quick sex) and many other terms. They knew I would ask them to explain these terms and that gave them power over me. Language became a clear marker of our different worlds in terms of class, social status, and religion. Most of my informants are multilingual. They speak isiXhosa, isiZulu, seSotho, Afrikaans, and *Tsotsitaal*. This benefit the men immensely when they go to their place of informal work, as they can interact with almost anyone.

### ***‘Native anthropology’, ‘Citizen anthropology’***

Writing on the native and non-native anthropologists, Narayan (1993:671) argues that “instead of a paradigm emphasizing a dichotomy between outsider/inside or observer/observed, I propose that... we might more profitably view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations.” She maintains that “what we must focus our attention on is the quality of relations with the people we seek to represent in our texts...” (1993:672). I believe

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<sup>32</sup> For a more detailed account of the circumcision process among the Xhosa people see chapter 4, *Five stages of manhood*, where I describe this process and show that to be a man is a long, complex process with so many people involved. Manhood among Xhosa people is an acquired status, where one has to endure pain to graduate and should he fail that will stay with him for the remainder of his life.

that I built excellent relationships with my informants. The debate on anthropologists working at home often underplays the fact that we might share similar attributes with the people we work with, but “we differ in terms of race, age, gender and country (place) of birth, and so do the people among whom each of us works” (Becker, Boonzaier, & Owen, 2005:123). This is an important observation which I also noticed during my field work, as I have already shown. The place of birth has a great influence on our understanding of specific ways of doing things. For instance, in our group discussions, we had different views about the initiation practice, how it should be done and its meaning. This is a very sensitive topic among those who practice it and it has led to heated discussions, sometimes with deaths. There is a big difference between those who do initiation in urban context and ‘us’ in the villages. I explore this discussion further in chapter five with some caution because some are of the view that it should not be written or shared in public space. I also believe that this is a sacred practice but it is already in public dialogue, therefore I will be doing disservice on my dissertation if I were to exclude such a debate here as it is a critical marker of masculinity. So I needed to be very careful and respect their understanding of this important aspect of our culture. Drawing from Angela Cheater’s work, Becker et al (2005:124) state that

...citizen anthropologists face different subjective professional realities from those who work in societies other than their own. They are faced by issues of equality and, particularly, with the necessity to recognise the conceptual frameworks of one’s fellow-citizens... [as] an equal and alternative reality that affects oneself.

The challenge I also faced in this research is that as a “citizen anthropologist” working at home I was “less able... to shelve local interpretations of reality...” than it would have been for an outsider just visiting for fieldwork purposes with the knowledge that he will pack his bags by the end of field work (Becker et al, 2005:124). Mfecane (2014:1) correctly points out that “the more we know of our research subjects, and the more comfortable they feel with us as researchers, the more insightful our research findings are likely to be.” Indeed, there are certain aspects of my informants’ lives which I believe they only shared with me because of the trusting and respectful manner we treated each other. These include information about their casual sexual partners, their prior criminal involvement (such as deceiving the law enforcers by changing names in order to hide ones offenses), drugs, and many more other sensitive issues. In thinking about the meaning of these relationships for both the researcher as well as informants, I find Mfecane’s (2014) work insightful, especially his take on the value of honest relations with informants as compared to “fake” relations. Indeed such a deceitful approach is

irresponsible because it allows one to play with people's emotions by opening up their homes and hearts to the researcher who has no compassion for them. In my study I was always careful to ensure that I treat people with respect, care and tried to develop close and non-hierarchical relationships (Mfecane, 2014, 2). It was important for me to show respect and be at the level where they felt comfortable around me. This is vital in poor households so that people do not feel embarrassed, for instance about their lack of food and thus their inability to offer hospitality. Food and space were always negotiated by my informants in very careful ways. Generally, in terms of my upbringing which teaches hospitality to visitors in terms of food was the opposite of my overall experience in Gugulethu homesteads. It would be easy to assess from this that the notion of *ubuntu* is no longer relevant within these families but I would point to the prevailing poverty in these houses and the limits this imposes on the capacity to offer hospitality. With the knowledge that one among black people cannot eat alone while others are watching, family members develop strategies on how and when should meals be eaten. That level of consciousness alone shows the level of respect given to others in a non-offensive manner.

It is very difficult to watch people not having the very basics in life. Indeed, it was emotionally draining to observe people living in deep poverty which is visible in their bodies, sometimes refusing to take their HIV/AIDS treatment because someone has not eaten, views on when to start a child on HIV treatment due to its life-time dependence once you start, and many other daily struggles. My informants did not have regular reliable incomes and most did not eat regularly. There were times where I felt obliged to bring them bread, tea, sugar and fruit. But in cases like these people can easily become dependent on you, so to manage their expectations I never made this a regular occurrence. These people sacrificed their time and welcomed me in their homes knowing that I was not going to pay them. I felt I should once in a while do good for them as well. One of the key challenges I faced every time I was in the community was people asking for 50 cents, R1 and *iponti* (R2). It was quite a challenge not to give someone especially when it is asked to buy something important in the house like electricity money, paraffin, or bread. The Anthropology Southern Africa (2005:142) ethical guidelines make provision for compensation, emphasising that "research participants should not be exploited. Fair return should be made for their help and services." Despite this recognition, there is little that these ethical guidelines have to offer to the researcher's emotions on the field other than the principles of not inflicting harm on the



research informants, securing their consent, and not betraying their confidence (Mfecane, 2014:1). Below I offer concrete cases where I had to take decisions that have ethical implications but as part of managing researcher-informant relationships I believe that I took the correct decisions. For instance, as I show below, by stepping in as a Xhosa man, as I would have done in my village in similar circumstances, to negotiate the release of a child before he was sent to the police custody which might have long term implications in his life. Knowing how the same state institutions in this community have failed young children, I had to protect the child from further harm. In fact, as anthropologists working at home, we naturally assume added expectations from our participants and the community at large as shown by Mfecane's (2014) work among HIV-positive men in Bushbuckridge. For instance, if there is a traditional ritual I am expected to fully participate in it, unlike a non-citizen who might be excused for not eating certain foods. Even though I am not the one who like to eat at funerals, I had to be seen eating to avoid being labelled as *uphakamile* ('he thinks highly of himself') or *usijongela phantsi* ('he looks down on us'). The significance of eating at funerals in particular has a cleansing function called *ukomula*. When returning from the grave site everyone was given *iinkobe* (maize grain – not too much cooked to a point where they are soft on chewing. In town *iinkobe* has been replaced by short-bread biscuits). By not eating *iinkobe* and taking a piece of the meat slaughtered, it is believed that one is taking with him the bereaving family's bad luck.

I was always mindful of how individuals who behave otherwise are lambasted in "their communities". For instance, Ngwane (2001:415-16) talks about the ways "teachers were constantly viewed as potentially antisocial" if they did not attend communal ceremonies. As he notes, "The people were more sensitive to behaviour that suggested that the teachers (educated people) had risen beyond the local ways of life, that they did not belong to the community" (ibid). Daily life in this community is characterised by values of *ubuntu*, which uphold respect for visitors, respect for elders (*ukuhlonipha*), greeting people when you meet them, and sharing meals with neighbours (Porteus, 2006:3). So it is critical for us insiders not to be seen as just extracting data but blending in well in all other social activities.

Throughout the research process I also noted that people are research fatigued in the community. Some openly wanted to join the research only if there would be incentive for doing so. One of the men, Manelisi, who took part in our first meeting

where I was explain the study to them, confronted me few days later in a very aggressive and violent manner on the street asking me *“when are you going to pay us?”* It was a very uncomfortable moment for me because I could see, by that time I knew he was on drugs, that he was high and wanted money for more drugs. Despite me making it clear that I would not pay them, he wanted to be paid saying that he would not tell others if I give him money. But I knew he was lying to me; he would have asked others to do the same in demanding payment from me. There is a feeling among some residents that researchers often come and get data but never come back. In fact, some went on to say research does not effect change in their lives. To deal with this charge I always reminded my informants that my research is for a PhD qualification and I can only hope that those in authority would read it and address some of the challenges facing this community. In the end they were satisfied with this explanation and honesty from me. Similar to Mfecane (2014) my experience in the field taught me that to manage friendships I must be willing to sacrifice as well for instance by taking people to the clinics, taking children to events where they might not have been able to go.

Getting to know my participants was not an easy task. You can never be sure how strangers will react towards you for the first time. The temptation to know more about someone is always there, but I needed to build trust first so the more serious questions about people’s pasts had to wait. These men were initially suspicious of me. They thought I might be a police spy or a social worker. Some wanted to join the Infants Study only if they would be paid. Strangely a few wanted to join if there would be a camera or a video tape so that they could appear on television. I soon learned that one of the biggest challenges for young and resourceless researchers is the tendency of big companies, particularly those conducting quantitative research, to pay participants. People in Gugulethu are used to short term projects including participating in advertisements that pay them. This makes it difficult for projects like mine to get informants where the aim is to visit people in their homes frequently over a long period of time.

All informants who participated in the project willingly gave their consent, mostly verbally. I noticed that when I asked people to sign on a piece of paper it felt like a contract to them and some were reluctant to sign despite being interested in the project. I explained the aims of the study to all the participants and told them that the material is for a PhD degree. I explained the study in their home language. It was stated clearly in

the consent form that informants have a right to withdraw from the study any time and they would remain anonymous if they so wish. Research ethics committees at the University of Cape Town approved the Infants Study design as per requirements of the National Institute of Health (USA). The second aspect of this project which focused primarily on fathers and children was approved by the ethics committee of the Department of Social Anthropology at UCT, as mandated by the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee.

### **Ethical quandaries and ‘failed fatherhood’**

This project has been an interesting exploration, to say the least, having to observe different forms of fathering practices or lack thereof by my informants. The two incidents I am going to share in this section had both ethical implications for my research but also these stories will show what happens to children when fathers fail to perform their fathering duties as prescribed by their community. In both these cases, fathers live in the same household with their sons and therefore the possibility of them not knowing what is happening to the child is irrelevant. I offer narratives which show considerable complexity in household decision-making in a context in which the state is ill-equipped to address children’s well-being. I have selected these cases because they provide me with an opportunity to better understand how fathering is practiced in this new model of nuclear family that seems to be emerging in Gugulethu. I am very critical of this model because I believe that black children benefited immensely from the way of life that valued and incorporated other kin members such as *omalume* (uncles), *otatomncinci* (child’s father’s younger brothers), *otatomkhulu* (grandparents) in their everyday socialisation. For me the stories I relate below raise the question, what do we mean exactly when we talk about responsible fathering? I believe that the structure these households are taking greatly disadvantages children because other kin male members are excluded from the affairs of the family unit to a point where married women assume male functions, even leading clan rituals. It is important to note though that family formations in Gugulethu are a structural consequence, a direct legacy of the apartheid system that radically destabilised black families.

### *Case One: Njabu's story*

On 21 Feb 2012, when I arrived for a routine visit to Sizwe, his girlfriend Minazana, mother of Njabu, worriedly told me that Njabu had been arrested at Spar in Gugulethu *Eyethu* Shopping Mall at around 14:00. Njabu, at the time 2 years 11 months old, had accompanied Beauty, Sizwe's elder sister, who planned to steal from the shop. Intercepted by security guards, she ran away leaving Njabu behind. Beauty went home and told Minazana and Sizwe what had happen to Njabu. Neither Minazana nor Sizwe knew that Njabu had gone with Beauty to the Mall and both parents are on drugs (tik, dagga, mandrax, alcohol.). After Beauty told them, she went to her own bungalow where her boyfriend was waiting. They continued to drink cheap wine and beer there. Minazana took a taxi to Spar to see if she could come back with Njabu but the security guards and the manager were demanding R370, which is double the value of the milk stolen for his release. Failure to pay this money before 19:00 meant Njabu would be taken to the police station where the police would see what to do with him. She did not have this money so she came back home and told Beauty. Beauty told Minazana that she does not have such an amount they, at Spar, must wait for her government grant<sup>33</sup>. Minazana told Beauty to borrow the money so that she can get Njabu back because he did not do any shoplifting at Spar. Beauty refused to borrow money. Sizwe was also at home, but he never went to Spar at any stage of his son's arrest. When I asked him what action had he taken to get his son back he said, *"I didn't take my son to the Mall. The person who took him there will bring him back."* It seems fair to view his response as irresponsible. But having worked with him for so long this did not surprise me. In our encounters I was able to see that he feels proud being called a father, but he find the duties associated with this title quite challenging mostly.

It is important also to alert the reader to the fact that long before Njabu was born, there was a social worker visiting Njabu's grandmother, Mams, weekly to monitor her recovery progress after she had stroke on her right arm. Then without notice, the woman just stopped visiting Mams. Her sudden disappearance had devastating effects on Mams and other family members who relied on her to provide professional help to a stroke victim. Often when I asked Mams how she felt about not having a social worker any more, she suggested that maybe she is the one to blame for not making speedy

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<sup>33</sup> Beauty is HIV-positive with her boyfriend, Lion, and are both receiving government grant for their status.

progress. *“Hey Andile maybe she left me because she felt I was not getting better quickly but now I don’t know. We had nice sessions, nice conversations which made me forget about the situation of this house. She even invited me to start going back to church and I was looking forward to that because I love church”*, she remarked one day. Here, the failure in continuity of care of a state institution is internalised as personal responsibility and self-blame. In addition to the social worker, the police made numerous visits to the family arresting Sizwe at least three times during my field work (he has been to prison 8 times in his life by the end of my field work) for selling drugs, particularly dagga and tik. The police also frequented the house because of Beauty’s troubles with the law. Beauty had been arrested for more than nine times at home and in shopping malls mostly for shoplifting. Generally, the family has a history of trouble with the law due to drugs. Mams also made her living by selling drugs. Mams’ response to me raises an important issue for us to consider before inviting external structures such as social workers into our informants’ families and that is to consider the after effects of such interventions when we are long gone as field researchers (see also Cluver et al, 2014). If we facilitate children being taken away from their families, we also need to ensure that there are well functioning structures to assist them to cope better when they return from an institution to a dysfunctional home.

Njabu’s incident raised a great ethical quandary for me. I decided not to report this incident to the police or social workers<sup>34</sup>; instead I had a meeting with both Njabu’s parents and his grandmother to warn them that if anything happens again I will report it and the child might be taken away from them. My decision to exclude authorities was informed by my knowledge that state structures have already failed this family despite being aware of the problems in the household. My decision therefore not to report this incident to the government organs was partly informed by these incompetences. It was also informed by the cultural model of responsible masculine identities I had grown up with in my birth-village in the Eastern Cape, as I discuss below. But also I was concerned about the impact such a decision might have had on my relationship with the family and the community going forward, hence jeopardising my field work. Mfecane (2014:1) warns us that “if friendships in the field need to be carefully managed, this itself is a two-way process, and our research subjects are just as much the authors of these relationships as we researchers are.” The South African Children’s Act requires professionals (police, social workers and psychologists) working with children who witness abuse to report it

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<sup>34</sup> Minazana was relieved that no police were involved because her first daughter is with social workers in Khayelitsha after she left her alone

to the relevant authorities. It does not take a stance on researchers, although other legislation requires adults to report violence and neglect. My legal obligations were thus unclear. However, state failure in previous occasions did not give me confidence in addressing Njabu's situation through these organs.

On my arrival around 17:00 Sizwe had gone to buy cigarette from the Somalian shop nearby. He was high on tik and dagga as always. He was so relaxed as if nothing had happened to his son. Taking into account his response when I asked him what action had he taken to bring his son back, it became clear to me that as an African man who understand traditional models of responsibility for children I had to step up and play the role he should have played had he gone beyond blaming his sister and considered the effects on the child. In his chapter on domestication, agency and subjectivity in the village of Bamenda in Cameroon, Nyamnjoh (2002:113), raises an important feature of African culture which is relevant for this discussion as it contextualise the manner I reacted to the situation. In his chapter: *A child is one person's only in the womb* he remark that in its most common usage this widely held view about children reinforces the idea of the individual as a child of the community, as someone allowed to pursue the fulfilment of his/her needs, but not greed. You belong to your mother exclusively only when still in the womb. Once delivered, you are expected to be of service to the wider community (2002:115) and that community becomes responsible for you. Because Sizwe failed in his responsibilities, I felt that it was automatically expected of me to take responsibility for his son because a child belongs to everyone or entire community. *AmaXhosa* also have a similar saying that *umntana wam ngowakho, owakho ngowam* (my child is your child, [and] your child is mine). These traditional models of responsibility for children dictate that any man, regardless of paternity, must step in when child's life is in danger. It was this kind of upbringing, teachings and communal expectation that led me to play the fatherhood role after realising that Sizwe had ignored his responsibilities. I intervened and negotiated with the security guards and management at the shop, who eventually agreed to give Njabu over.

I was very much aware of the belief that says in order to remain impartial observers, it is advisable to continue with the research process and not intervene, and then after the field work has finished go back to address issues or even alert authorities. As noble as this sound, the reality is that it might be too late to change the situation and in this case the trauma the child would endure being taken to the police custody or social

workers have long term effects. For the rest of his life he will grow up with those images of incarceration. In other words, you would have left the frog in boiling water far too long for it to even attempt to crawl afterwards. I did not pay for the child's release but the manager at Spar trusted me. She took my car's registration number and cell phone number. She did not trust the mother even though the child was excited to see his mother again. Her dishevelled appearance had a lot of influence on the manager's lack of trust.

In a case in which state resources are unreliable, I believe I made the correct decision. This does not mean that I am at ease with it. The failure to take action can have long-term emotional regrets for the researcher him/herself.<sup>35</sup> Yet, I stood as a guarantor of the child's well-being in a context where family and state both failed. When crises occurs Nyamnjoh (2002:115) states that in line with traditional models of responsibility for children "you are not expected to decline rendering service to this or that person because they are not family." African traditional models demand that a man should avail himself in the best possible manner for the safety of children. In fact, it is not only men who are expected to fulfil this function, any elder including women because children belong to the community and not a particular family in the strict sense of the model. I continue to monitor Njabu's situation long after research has ended.

#### *Case Two: Sihle's story*

Sihle, 11 years old in 2012, had been living with HIV since birth. His mother, a young woman from Port Elizabeth (PE), died four years previously in 2009 from an AIDS-related illness. Sihle's maternal family from Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province has never been involved in his life and he has never been to PE. Since his mother's death he has lived with his paternal family under the care of his father's mother, Nomonde. Sihle's father, Siyabulela (aged 34 at the time I began research), refused to take his son to the clinic. Despite his having been very ill in the preceding few months. Siyabulela had an outburst one day towards his mother because she kept asking him to take his son to the clinic. He told Nomonde that he did not want *lenkenkwe* - 'this boy' in

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<sup>35</sup> A case in point is Sindiso Weeks who decided not to report the abuse of young women by South African soldiers policing the border, whose conduct was "partly enabled by local complicities with the soldiers' willingness to turn a blind eye to illegal border crossings by local people and their families on the other side of the border. That the soldiers were conspicuously well-armed and corrupt made the challenges of exposing their behavior that much more complex for Weeks (in Ross & Posel, 2014:11). Years after her field work, Weeks regretted the fact that she did not report these incidents to the Public Protector.

the first place to come and live with them but Nomonde had taken him in after the child's mother died. He told Nomonde it was her responsibility to care for his health as she had taken him in without discussion. Siyabulela resigned from his job as a cleaner in December 2012. He has a history of drugs and alcohol use, and of violence including against his mother, Nomonde (then aged 67).

Despite his sickness, Nomonde and Siyabulela's sister, Zoleka (then 32 years old), refused to start giving him antiretrovirals (ARVs). His CD 4 count cell had dropped from 587 to 145 by end of March 2013 and doctors told the family to give him treatment right away. Zoleka, who is also HIV-positive, insisted that Sihle's CD 4 count would improve; he must just keep eating garlic, raw liver and other immune boosters as was controversially proposed by the late Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, the former health minister in President Thabo Mbeki's government.<sup>36</sup> Zoleka, together with her mother, feared that once Sihle started taking ARVs he would have to take them for the rest of his life.

Unlike in Njabu's case, in Sihle's situation I did not intervene or make an attempt to persuade the family to give him his medication. My decision was informed by the presence of a medical doctor who has a legal right, even an obligation, to take the family to task for refusing to give the child a lifesaving treatment, or to force administration himself. Because the doctor knew about the family's decision to wait a bit longer and their attempts to get him recover by giving immune boosters such as garlic, it gave me an opportunity to observe the effectiveness of the health system in this context.

Both stories shared above take us even closer to the realities of young children in this community. In effect, Njabu and Sihle have present fathers who are emotionally absent. I take this up in later chapters.

In response to the situations described above, my supervisor and I decided that I should continue visiting these two families even though my field work was completed. This both shows compassion for fellow human beings and demonstrates some of the responsibilities of being an anthropologist 'at home'. The cases and my responses to

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<sup>36</sup> The former President came under a lot of criticisms for questioning the link between HIV and Aids. Often misunderstood, activists and other sections of the media blame him for the lives the country lost during his tenure as president.



them demonstrate the complexities of research relations and raise questions about the duration of ethnographic research and the responsibilities it entails.

### **Returning to Anthropology ‘at home’**

The advantage for me to do this research ‘at home’, as it were, is that I was able to bridge the gap that is so complex and often undervalued of the interplay between entering and exiting the field in this situation. Had I been working away far from my community, I would not have been able to follow what happened to Sihle after the end of my field work. This case raises the question of how do we leave the field site? How do you walk away and never go back? Is that ethically correct? This raises that ethically complicated question about the beginning and ending of the research itself; about the beginning and ending of the interventions; beginning and ending of one’s sense of human connection (such as a social worker who just vanished) in the context where the state’s interventions have completely failed to provide support and continuity to families in need.

Muzvidziwa (2004:306-7) is very critical of researchers who do field work away from home who might lack commitment and can leave at any time. He quotes an example of Rabinow who studied locals in Morocco, who conceded that “I had a strong sense of being American. I knew it was time to leave.” For Muzvidziwa (2004:307) this kind of attitude is a sign of “...arrogance and lack of empathy not characteristic of non-citizen anthropologists; this could be regarded as a kind of deceitful behaviour. Such an attitude shows that to a great extent non-citizen anthropologists rarely fully assimilate into the communities they study.” Our actions today in the communities we study will determine the future of other researchers who might be interested to investigate other social aspects in these communities. Besides what we do today has a direct impact on the growth of our discipline either positively or otherwise. This case raises the question of how do we leave the field? How could we walk away and never go back to the communities that build our professional profiles? Is it ethically correct to just walk away?

The mutual benefit of ethnographic research lies in the fact that it enables the establishment of close relationships/friendships. Yet, the end of the field work often symbolises the termination of contact between friends, researcher and participant. Of course there is no written code that we should even keep their contact numbers and

conversations on social media. By ending our contact we are actually showing that we do not care about their feelings. Emile Boonzaier and colleagues (2005:128) report on how informants expressed gratitude on the fact that he kept contact and visited them, taking his family and giving them an opportunity to also learn about his own personal life. I also have the same experience in Gugulethu with family members asking about my wife and daughter showing real interest in me. Despite the fact that my field work officially finished in March 2013, I am still in contact with the men through phone calls, text messaging (smsz), sometimes visits and unplanned encounters where we just meet. This field work has also had an effect at a personal level in that when my wife first accompanied me to some of the families, she could not hold her tears on returning home after seeing how people could survive in such poverty. As an educator, she is not used to see the kinds of background the children they teach come from. This research has been an eye opener for her as well. She is the one sometimes who remind that we should go and see how our friends are doing. It is those small things that people sometimes appreciate more. Such interest shows that we are not just interested in our informants as research subjects, but as friends and fellow human beings. In this sense, I have tried to give life to an ethic of *ubuntu* in the research process (see notes to the Principles of Conduct, Anthropology Southern Africa 2005).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Understanding fatherhood: a review of the literature**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I engage with different bodies of literature on fatherhood, masculinity and child care. The chapter crafts a way forward in thinking about the findings of my research, particularly the relationships that exist between fathers and children. The chapter discusses different ways in which Africans perform their masculinity and how they are in turn viewed by the state. Discussion on the role of the state and how it views men shows that South Africa, like many African states, is patriarchal but men at the lower strata of society feel that they are oppressed in terms of rights which turn to favour women and children. All this together with the changing role men occupy within households shows that men no longer hold the same power they used to enjoy in the past. As a result men, to express their masculinity and maintain some form of control over women and children, often resort to other means such as violence. In this chapter we also begin to see that, unlike their fathers or previous generations, this group of young men have few connections to the countryside<sup>37</sup> and this has implications for the repertoire of ideas and experiences, social networks and models on which they frame their masculine identities and behaviours. The different ways fatherhood is constructed, performed and understood in urban context versus the countryside is key in explaining the behaviour and conduct of my informants in this study.

#### **Fatherhood**

There is a general consensus among scholars (Reynolds, 2000; Mkhize, 2004; Richter & Morrell, 2006) that fatherhood, like motherhood, is a socially constructed category, greatly shaped by political, historical, as well as sociocultural environments. As such, fatherhood is constantly changing over time and space. A review of the literature shows that fathers continue to play various roles in the bringing up of their children. As I have early argued, there is an increasing effort to ensure 'paternal involvement' in

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<sup>37</sup> Here I am not suggesting that it is questionable if young men see themselves as belonging to the city, after all it is where they live.

children's lives. The literature reveals that the nature and extent of their involvement differs because it is often guided by their culture and "...like other social roles, [men's contributions] vary from culture to culture and among subcultures" (Gavin et al., 2002:268). Consequently, researchers concur that there can never be a complete agreement on what 'paternal involvement' entails, "how to conceptualize it", and "how to measure it" (Palkovitz, 1997:200). I suggest that ethnographic research, because it pays special attention to details, is better placed to shed light on how best to understand fathers' roles in various communities at different times in history. To situate my thesis in the broader field of fatherhood and masculinity, I employ the following definition which views paternal involvement to have at least

...five paternal functions that are common in many cultures, although the relative importance of each varies by culture: *endowment*, acknowledging the child as one's own; *protection*, protecting the child from sources of potential danger and contributing to decisions that affect the child's welfare; *provision*, ensuring that the child's material needs are met; *formation*, socialization activities, such as discipline and teaching; and *caregiving*, meeting the physical needs of the baby by feeding, diapering, bathing, and so on (Gavin et al., 2002:268).

This is a working definition and by means comprehensive. I am very much aware that this definition does not include for instance social attachment which is core in my thesis but very useful nonetheless because it shed light on all key functions fathers are expected to fulfil in most cultures. Endowment is a key theme throughout my thesis because it is widely held among Nguni-language speakers that simply acknowledging pregnancy is not enough. A man needs to take further steps. These include compensating the woman's family if they are not married and introducing his child into his own lineage to give the child an identity in terms of the clan name as well as protection against evil spirits from his ancestors. Indeed, even if they are married as Sean Jones (1992) argues, as long as a man has not finished paying for *ilobola* (bride wealth) the woman's family can take their daughter and children from him. In addition, it was customary to do *imbeleko*, a ritual of recognition, that, as already described (see Chapter One) aimed to incorporate the child into his lineage, among other purposes. But also endowment is essential because African men are often labelled in public discourse as problem fathers, as 'mere sperm donors' who impregnate women and run away. As we will see later in the chapter the majority of black children have no regular contact with their fathers. I therefore draw on my ethnographic accounts to explore the challenges my informants face in their attempts to meet these cultural obligations in later chapters. It is from these accounts

that one is able to particularise and localise understandings of fatherhood, and either corroborate or dispel these claims about black fathers.

It is often assumed or taken for granted that married fathers are in a better position to perform the functions mentioned in our definition above in their children's lives because they are likely to be living at home with them. However, Engle (1997:31) warns that residence of the father within the household does not automatically mean either an economic contribution to his family, or involvement with his children. I show this in relation to Sizwe and his own father in later chapters.

This means therefore unmarried and unemployed fathers might even face tougher and more complex cultural, socio-economic, as well as moral obstacles in their attempts to "be there" for their children. It is for this reason then I believe that the above definition of paternal involvement is not broad enough as it fails to account for external barriers that might be beyond fathers' control at times. For example, I regularly came across instances in which the child's mother or her family acted as gatekeeper, making it impossible for a father to see and interact with his child. They did so with reference to cultural ideas about marriage, compensation and belonging. I suggest therefore that the environment where fathering is taking place must be given more attention in our analyses. To illustrate my point, let us take the experiences of Vuyo, one of the fathers in my study. Vuyo's first son was removed from Cape Town by the child's mother's family, and he has no way of tracing him or the mother's family. The informal settlement where the child's mother used to stay is no longer there. His son was taken away from him mainly due to his failure to pay the compensation money for impregnating his girlfriend but also because the maternal grandmother feared raising a boy child in Khayelitsha Township where young boys are easily attracted to join gang groupings. Three other fathers in the study, Thando, Mabhanti and Siyabulela experienced their child's mothers' interference in their attempts to gain access to their children. In the next chapters I discuss these challenges in depth because they determine whether a father has access to his child or not.

Acknowledging a child is quite a big factor as it determines whether the father is given access to the child or not. We will see in chapter five and seven that most of my informants do not deny paternity but that does not always lead to positive action in terms of taking responsibility for the child. This is further complicated by pregnancies/children young men deem to be born as 'mistakes'.

Similarities are quite evident in most of the fatherhood conceptualisations offered by different theorists from various disciplines. From a psychological perspective, Nhlanhla Mkhize (2004:3) states that “Fatherhood does not occur in a vacuum: it is a socio-moral process informed by the dominant discourses of what it means to be a man in one’s society.” Presenting his argument from an African perspective, Mkhize believes that individual’s behaviour is not only shaped by what one learn within his/her family but also shaped to a large extent by his communal norms and standards. Along similar lines, prominent anthropologist Pamela Reynolds (2000:157) asserts that the concepts of motherhood and fatherhood “...are not merely given in natural processes but are cultural constructions elaborated differently across societies”. I share the same views with these scholars’ of fatherhood. I agree with Reynolds that both fatherhood and motherhood as processes are shaped by both internal as well as external factors within specific contexts. Hence I invite the reader in my exploration of a sub-group of Nguni-language speakers living in Cape Town to see how they understand and practice fatherhood, particularly their cultural obligations, failures and responsibilities in a new democratic South Africa and in a context of radical undermining of social possibilities.

Another paradigm, “the generative-fathering framework” emphasises the nature of engagement between fathers and their children. The key factor here is an assessment of how fathers respond to the needs of their children as obligated and imposed by ones sociocultural context (Marsiglio et al., 2000:1176-1177). This model suggests that fathering is reproduced through lived experience. In other words, the manner in which someone is raised is likely to determine how he raises his own children (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Based on this view I also describe in the thesis the kinds of relationships or lack thereof my informants were able to formulate with their own fathers. Given that most of my informants never had much contact with their own fathers and had few positive male role models – largely the result of the savage political-economy of apartheid, which sundered African families, the failings I describe have historical depth. If young fathers, like my half-brothers Andile and Songezo, never had direct experience of being fathered by their own father, what kind of fathers would they become?

The third paradigm explores fatherhood using the notion of social capital. Social capital, a concept developed by the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, has largely been embraced by sociologists. Marsiglio and Cohen (2000:85) state that in the context of fatherhood studies, social capital, as an all-encompassing concept, “...when related to

fathers' involvement in children's lives, indexes paternal contributions to family-based and community-based relations that typically benefit children's cognitive and social development." From an anthropological perspective, this model offers a valuable insight in its recognition that father's wider social networks could benefit children by offering them protection and affordances. This model recognises the opportunities that could be established between children of male friends, extending their social networks. Social capital is based on the belief that "trust, mutual expectations, and a sense of loyalty" are central for a healthy relationship between fathers and their children and female partners (Marsiglio & Cohen, 2000:85). When conceptualised in this fashion, social capital becomes consistent with the basic sociological principle that access to a wide variety of intangible social resources can enhance individuals' well-being (ibid). This model is particularly useful in my study given that the youth have small social networks, unlike the more extended networks their fathers and grandparents relied on to secure employment in the past. The problem with this model though is that its proponents have a tendency to see it as a cure for all social ills without really acknowledging its limitations. This is problematic because in communities such as Gugulethu the thick social networks of engagement and trust can be used by extreme minorities to cultivate and promote bad behaviours (Florida, 2002:269) through exposing young children into drugs, theft, and early sexual experiments.

Recognition of fathers' involvement together with the need to encourage them to "be there" for their children has been taken up into policy in some countries. For instance, the Norwegian government made it a constitutional right for fathers to be allowed to spend time with their children, an initiative marked by a generous paternity leave allowance. The provision aims to motivate "...more fathers to take an active role in the care of children during their first year" (Natter, 2005:12). Initiated in 1987, the provision expanded steadily to enable fathers to spend time with their young children. "Fathers are encouraged to spend time with their children from birth with the strongest incentives reserved for spending time alone with the child" (Morrell, 2006:21). Morrell (ibid) reports that fathers have become more 'invested' in the lives and routines of their children. It is argued that this also has an impact on fathers themselves in that their constructions of masculinity have shifted from focusing on the classic aspect of masculinity such as work, sport, and body to child-centred rhythms (Brandth & Kvande, 2002 in Morrell, 2006:21). This model seeks to promote "good fathering." It is not clear

though what incentives if any are in place to encourage unmarried and unemployed fathers to perform the same role for their children.

A number of key anthropological studies in South Africa (Hunter, 1961; Wilson & Mafeje, 1963; Murray, 1980; Cole, 1987; Jones, 1990 & 1992; Henderson, 1999; Reynolds, 1984 & 2000; Ramphele, 2000; Hunter, 2010) provide insight into historical changes and their impact on black families, particularly on children. They show unambiguously the ways that socio-economic constraints operated to limit and undermine black family life. Their work show the impact apartheid had on black families by separating men from their children and wives. Despite this historical and ethnographic evidence, there is a growing body of literature and social interventions that see black men as ‘problem fathers’ and seek to remedy their failure, without cognisance of the historical or current conditions under which fatherhood is enacted. Generally, black fathers in South Africa are viewed in negative terms by the general populace – including men themselves. In chapter seven I unpack the nuances of “responsible fathering”. I describe some of the initiatives that have gathered momentum in Africa and elsewhere in an attempt to get fathers involved in their children’s lives. I also discuss the status of a child in South Africa, drawing from the Constitution with specific reference to the Children’s Act as the guide on expected roles fathers ought to play for their children but also for critical decisions taken by the courts in times of disputes. In South Africa there is a general belief that the state favours interests of women and children. Men, similar to crime victims in the country, see themselves as oppressed by legal institutions as I discuss in the next section.

### **The changing role of men within households**

Socio-economic changes shape popular conceptions of families, children, mothers and fathers. This means contemporary understandings of the family structure shall also take into account such changes. The state, through its legislation, is a key stakeholder in shaping how families organize themselves in each society (Reynolds, 2000). Generally, states are seen as fundamentally patriarchal in nature; and this is enforced through societal institutions such as the church, schools, work environment, the family, to maintain male dominance over women (Hoffman, 1995; Masinjila, 1994).



Constitutional gender equity provisions are often undermined in the everyday practices of people and the state.

Prior to industrialisation and the arrival of the Dutch in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in South Africa, African fathers were undoubtedly performing different roles in their families. In the past fathers used to perform the so called traditional roles which include being a provider and give care to children (Eddy et al., 2013:13). But, this is no longer the case or happening to the same extent as the ties between fathers and their children seem weaker than was the case historically. Indeed, some authors suggest that fathers are now more likely to abandon their children than ever before. Eddy et al (2013:22) have identified five reasons that lead to fathers deserting their children. These include “unemployment and poverty of fathers, dominant constructions of men and fathers as providers, cultural factors such as the high cost of *“ilobolo”* and damages in African communities, dysfunctional relationships between parents, and challenges relating to the move towards a new relationship after divorce or break up”. To make matters even worse, South Africa has the lowest marriage rate on the continent (Richter & Panday, 2006), the second highest rate of father absence in Africa after Namibia (Richter et al., 2012; Posel & Devey, 2006), low rates of paternal maintenance for children (Khunou, 2006). This points to the sad reality that many children grow up in households headed by single parents as I explore in chapter six. My participants identify some of these difficulties but also go further to share their own challenges such as the child’s mothers family interfering in the relationship or a child being sent to another province, making it impossible for the father to have contact with his child. As I show in chapter 5 and 6 among those with whom I worked, men and women increasingly have come to conceptualise ‘provision’ in terms of the provision of goods or money, thus rendering fatherhood as an economic relation that potentially bypasses older systems of familial investment.

Fathers in South Africa, similar to their counterparts elsewhere in Africa, had to deal with structural separation from their children, wives, and families due to a combination of colonization and urbanization. Certainly, the two processes radically transformed family lives and roles over the course of the last century (van Onselen, 1976). The advent of European imperialists in the continent gave supremacy to the imperialists’ ideologies on how Africans should live through the introduction of taxes which required local people to earn money (Horwitz, 2001). Prior to this, men were

instrumental in disciplining children, showing them how to utilise land for household upkeep and teaching them survival strategies. Given the nature of migrant employment introduced to Africans, most African fathers under the apartheid government were the main providers of monetary support, sending remittances to their families (Reynolds, 1984; Murray, 1980). Once men left for the mines or other migrant labour, it became the women's new role to raise children almost on their own. Most migrants only returned at Christmas time (Ngwane, 2003), when their contracts expired. This new family arrangement gave women more power in performing duties that were traditionally associated with the head of the household, usually a man. As Ngwane notes, women found themselves in unfamiliar territory where they had to take masculine roles. This might have created a gap between generations because women in some households had to take decisions around sensitive issues such as deciding when to send boys to initiation, something that was a sole responsibility of *umnumzana womzi* (the household head). This is by no means to undermine women's ability to be in charge but highlights a big change in family structure among black people which ultimately undermined men's authority in some households. During this period men were the first to leave and, much later followed by female migration from rural to urban areas in search of employment, and this meant families now separated for long periods of time (Posel, 2003).

The separation of the father from his children for such a long period had immediate consequences for men. Reynolds (1984) notes that the men she worked with in Langa, a township in Cape Town during the height of apartheid shared painful experiences of loss, noting that even when they went back 'home' they found it difficult to connect with their own children. Clearly the apartheid system, building on the labour migration patterns of colonialism, was instrumental in destabilising black families because children were often sent to live with relatives or grandparents for extended periods of time. Writing after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC) Ntshoe (2002) argues that children's schooling was also disrupted because families sent their children to urban areas to access better quality education but violence in urban areas would force families to send them back in the middle of the year for safety. Many parents were never able to live with their children in the same household for extended periods and this disrupted parent-child relationships. African children in South Africa grew up with wide social networks but without really 'bonding' with their parents in the way anticipated by psychological theories of attachment. Their own children had to endure

the same consequences. This means among Africans, childcare is generally provided by a variety of people<sup>38</sup> but parental care particularly that of fathers is not guaranteed.

Despite Constitutional guarantees to the right to a family life, and attempts to ensure this through legislation, social processes continue to undermine family life. For example, high rates of HIV and the state's initially very limited response to it saw many children sent back to the rural homes for care and later were joined by dying parents. Care responsibilities were cast on the elderly, reframing gender and generational relations.

### **Conceptualising paternal involvement**

Research on fatherhood in the last two decades has been dominated by “...psycho-social studies of father involvement, following Lamb’s (1986) influential construction of ‘involvement’ as engagement, that is, direct interaction with the child; accessibility or availability to the child; and responsibility for the care of the child” (Lewis & Welsh, 2005:82). In his analysis, Lamb is interested in the quantity of fathers’ behaviour towards their children such as how much time they spend with them. Subsequent studies though emphasise the significance of the content and quality of father’s involvement, and they have highlighted the importance of feelings, closeness and warmth (Amato, 1994; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; quoted in Lewis & Welsh, 2005:82). Simple frequency measures say little about the quality of the interaction (Amato & Gibreth, 1999; Cabrera *et al*, 2000). In fact, “statistical data can reveal much about the general features of social life, but they cannot tell us about how people experience the world or attempt to make sense of the events and processes that shape a life” (Ross, 2010:9-10). As a football coach Khompela put it: “Statistics are like a bikini, they reveal a lot but show nothing” (2 Dec, 2013, Kickoff Magazine). My thesis provides the meat that these scholars suggest is much needed in this sub-field through an exploration of life histories.

My review of the literature also suggests that contemporary studies lay emphasis on four broad areas with regards to research on fathers and children. Firstly, scholars concur with Smit (2006) that research on young fathers’ involvement focuses on

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<sup>38</sup> Which is not necessarily a problem. The problem for African children is the disrupted nature of the care they receive when the fragile bonds are broken by movement.

mothers' viewpoint (Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007). Smit (ibid) identifies a methodological shortfall in sociological research on the role of fathers and relationships within households. He argues that many of the research projects in sociology have a tendency to rely on women's reports on fathers' "attitudes towards domestic responsibilities, his spousal and paternal conduct and quality of the father-child relationship" (2006:402). In fact, it is not only sociologists who are guilty of this tendency; psychologists also, for some reason, tend to conduct most of their studies when fathers are at work – a convenient time for researchers who do not have the will to step out of their comfort zone which confirms the ways attachment and relationship are understood that the mother is assumed to be primary and the father secondary. Smit is very critical of the methodological processes normally adopted in studying and analysing the situation of fathers in South Africa specifically. He argues that although it is clear from many of the studies that men no longer enjoy the privileges of being the sole breadwinners in many households, "...it is less clear which new patterns of commitment and involvement these men are developing with regard to their family life" (Smit, 2006:401-2). The demands of ethnographic research employed in my project gave me an opportunity to work continuously in collecting detailed material from the fathers with whom I worked, from their family members over time, hence giving me a better understanding of men's intentions and actual practices towards their children. In the next chapters I discuss some of the new roles, expectations and how men are managing these responsibilities in absolute poverty.

Secondly, there is a strong emphasis "...on the nature of young father's own experiences of being fathered..." (Swartz & Bhana, 2009:3). There is no doubt that this is a useful way in helping to predict one's future behaviour. But the problem thus far with current studies is that researchers do not make connections on how such men in turn father their own children. My thesis seeks to close this void by making these contributions through an analysis of life histories of the young men. Thirdly, research emphasises the relationship between early fatherhood and negative life outcomes for the child (ibid). Lastly, researchers focus on stable nuclear families despite our knowledge that this family structure is no longer a norm anywhere in the world (Richter, 2006:54), and particularly not in South Africa, where family life has long been shaped and sundered by historical processes.

Research emphasis in South Africa is usually on mother-infant relationship. Apart from Reynolds' seminal work with men (1984; 2000), the work of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on the fatherhood project that led to the publication of two books, *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* (2006) and *Teenage Tata: Voices of Young Fathers in South Africa* (2009) represents the first real focus on fathers' role generally in their children's lives in South Africa. The two publications focus on the importance of encouraging positive masculinities in South Africa. However, I caution that we should be very careful to take at face value what young men/fathers tell us as researchers in once-off interviews. As I will show, it is easy to portray positive intentions and put the blame on others. It became clear to me that what we are told by informants often differs immensely to what one is able to observe once you befriend them and build trusting relationships over time.

Pedersen has identified four conceptual obstacles that have hindered research on fathers-infants/child relationships. First is what he calls stereotypic conceptions of family roles. Pedersen rightfully state that "every culture has its own definition or set of expectations regarding the nature of the family" (1980:2). In other words, every society define what constitutes a family; how its members differ from each other "...on the basis of gender, age, or kinship; and what comprises appropriate repertoires of behavior for members of these groups" (ibid). This is important to consider because family set-ups not only established the rules on what is considered acceptable behaviour for its members but also determine and punish what each gender can or cannot perform when it comes to child care. The second obstacle Pedersen identifies is developmental theories and their reliance on maternal influences. These theories are based on the understanding that mothers give birth to the infant and in most cultures mothers spend more time with the baby, hence she has more influence. In short this model is biologically based (1980:2). It is largely associated with Freud, and in it the father's role was not regarded as important until the age of three to five (Pedersen, 1980:4). Bowlby's attachment theory is critical here. Bowlby was concerned with the impact of social processes and institutional environments on children's development and this led to the development of a concept of "maternal deprivation" (Pedersen, 1980:5). The latter suggest that inadequate maternal care is detrimental to the child's well-being both in the present and, significantly, in the future (Cooper et al, 1999). The third barrier consists in a failure to consider the impact marital status have on the parent-child relationship. Pedersen raises this as a serious gap in our understanding of father-infant relationship in the literature. The kind of

relationship an infant is able to develop is also determined by the nature of parental relationship with the father. The fourth barrier is a failure to recognise “infant competences” (1980:8), which acknowledges the changes that have happened in the past few years in our understandings of the infants’ capabilities. Psychological research shows that infants are far more capable than previously thought. Pedersen argues that the reason fathers were ignored in developmental theory is because infants themselves were not considered to have the capabilities to formulate multiple relationships at an early age<sup>39</sup>. In a nutshell, the above barriers point to the importance of relationship formation a child is either allowed or prohibited to establish at an early age as these seem vital in shaping behaviour in critical stages of development.

By contrast to the developmental model’s emphasis on maternal attachment, a typical African conception of children with their fathers is that found amongst the Aka hunter-gatherers in southern Central African Republic and northern Congo-Brazzaville. Hewlett (1989:93) found that the “Aka parents are indulgent, as infants are held almost constantly, nursed on demand (breast-fed several times per hour), attended to immediately if they fuss, and are seldom, if ever, told “no!” “no!” if they misbehave (e.g., get into food pots, hit others, or take things from other children).” The study shows cases a significant role fathers play in caring for infants and reports that other family members other than the mother contribute the majority of the time in caring for the infants; about 60%. In fact, infant bonding is widely and deeply rooted. This is in direct contrast with the model of maternal attachment suggested by psychoanalytic theory that place emphasis on mother-infant bonding only. The Aka model emphasises that the child is part of a larger social grouping which provides care. A similar point has been made by Nyamnjoh (2002) who argues that a child only belongs to his/her mother only in the womb. After birth, child care is spread across different people and attachment relationships are wide. Other children in the households also provide an important care to the younger ones even in the presence of elders and they play a key role in teaching small children about the norms and expected behaviours. Hewlett (1989:101) also reports that among Aka, “men do not have physical or institutional control over women, violence against women is rare or non-existent, both women and men are valued for their different but complementary roles, there is flexibility in these gender roles, and holding infants is not perceived as being feminine or women’s work.” These findings

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<sup>39</sup> There might be a lack of empirical evidence to show the age at which black fathers begin to play with their infants, but certainly Xhosa men I know do this as early as the first week after birth.

suggest it is important to locate the child in the nexus of care, and to understand the models of masculinity in operation in given circumstances.

### *Social and Economic Fatherhood*

There seem to be a general consensus among different cultures that a social father is a man "...who demonstrates parental characteristics that make him like a father to the child" (Tamis-LeMonde & Cabrera, 1999:4). A social father could be a grandfather, uncle, relative or even a non-relative to the child as long as he performs the duties and expectations his community expect from all men. In Western societies, social fatherhood may include various ways of interacting with children like teaching, playing, nurturing and providing guidance (Gould & Gunther, 1993:46-55). Each society has its own expectations of the responsibilities elders are expected to perform for younger children. In Botswana, people describe a social father as any man who acknowledges the child and is seen by others as the father (Townsend, 1997:407). By contrast, economic fatherhood refers to the financial support men make towards the needs of children (Rabe, 2007:162). These roles often overlap.

In South Africa, the state plays an important role in assisting children financially up to the age of 18 years now through its Child Support Grant (CSG). The CSG was first introduced in 1998 and has become the biggest programme to assist many families from a complete poverty (Hall, 2014:1). Hall (ibid) notes that by 2014, the CSG of R300 was paid to more than 11.1 million children per month. Unfortunately these figures do not show us anything at all about whether or not children receive assistance from their fathers. Often fathers of these children are out of sight as well as out of mind; hence social fathers are expected to step in. This means economic fathering is no longer restricted to men but includes the state. Men's roles within households change over time as we have seen above. It is important therefore to see how those changes have shifted because they often define men's responsibilities within households but also how men view themselves in relation to children's care.

### *"Traditional" fathering*

In recent years the changing role of men within families has attracted considerable amount of interest between researchers and academics. Ria Smit (2006:401) in South Africa argues that "when placing the man's role in the family in a historical

perspective, it is clear that this role has undergone changes throughout the centuries.” On one hand, traditionally in patriarchal societies like South Africa men had the ultimate power and control and on the other end the integration of his nurturing qualities into his usual role as breadwinner, protector and provider of the family (ibid).

South Africa in particular is going through a period of moral panic about the behaviour and actions of men. Morrell and Jewkes (2011) warn that high levels of substance abuse<sup>40</sup> among African men and violence towards their female partners and children is unacceptably high. According to the latest figures from Statistics South Africa, mortality in terms of population group clearly show that black Africans are at high risk (67.4%) of dying violently young at the hands of other men compared to only (1.6%) for Indians/Asian (2011:23).

In Africa, children occupy a very special place within households and they are valued as such. Like in many societies, among the Nguni-speaking people adults are expected to protect and meet the needs of young children. Thus, a popular idiom that says in Xhosa language *umntana wakebo ngowam* (your child is my child) which captures the essence of a communal belonging. It further accentuates that young children need to be “...supported, loved and guided by adults, that s/he is a member of a community (and not just an isolated individual), and that adults have a collective responsibility for the upbringing of a child” (Morrell, 2006:15). A study (Cutrona *et al*, 1998) in South Africa found that young and unmarried fathers experience challenges to support their children, and the fact that many do not live with their children act as a barrier in maintaining regular contact and increasing their involvement with their children. Engagement, direct interaction and accessibility to the child when he wishes might not always be possible for an unmarried father who lives apart from the mother and the child. In post-apartheid South Africa, socio-economic conditions, including poor education, high school dropout rates, lack of skills training, very poor employment possibilities, a shortage of decent housing and services, and absence of income or assets to pay bride wealth or damages or child support limited such arrangements and have affected relationships between men and women, and between men and children. Reynolds (1984:14) reminds us that we need to consider the impact that separation has on the ability of a man to live in accord with

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<sup>40</sup> A big randomised trial (in total it will be 1350 men) I am currently managing in Khayelitsha attest to this. So far we have interviewed and tested 905 men and over 800 of these young men test positive for dagga, alcohol, and tik.



cultural expectations. When men are not involved in their children's lives, "how can they meet the culture's ideal as fathers?" she asks (ibid).

Communal beliefs and expectations on what fathers should do for their children influence how fathers in turn conduct themselves. The challenge for fathers then might arise when they only do what they think is expected of them and not what they are able to do. In working with my informants I was able to listen to what they think they were doing for their children but also I had the privilege to observe over time what they were actually doing. I believe that this is the value of ethnographic research. Some fathers in my sample did raise concerns of uncertainty about performing certain fathering roles usually associated with mothers and that to me was indicative of the fact that they might have internalised what their community, family members and friends expect or think a father/man should do for his child. The problem men face when they succumb to this pressure is that it restricts their creativity in terms of finding other roles they can perform for their children. I discuss these challenges further in chapter six and seven. With this in mind, I now turn to one of the leading models in research as far as child up bring is concerned and that is attachment theory.

### **Attachment theory and its application to fathers and infants**

It has been taken for granted that John Bowlby (1940; 1944; 1951; 1969) is the only founding father of attachment theory (Grossmann *et al*, 2002; Katorski, 2003).<sup>41</sup> Bowlby believed that, a child has "...to have a trusting, unconditional relationship with his or her mother in order to become a socially and emotionally adjusted adult" (Hewlett, 1989:88). His theory, deeply rooted in psychology, is concerned with relationships. It looks at how individuals, particularly infants, respond when hurt, separated from their loved ones (mothers or caregivers), or perceive a threat in the absence of a person they feel safe around (Waters *et al*, 2005:81). In developing his theory, Bowlby (1951) was of the view that mothering is almost meaningless if delayed until after two and a half to three years. For him, if the mother has been absent in the child's life all this period she

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<sup>41</sup> However, there is now evidence to suggest that Mary Ainsworth developed the idea of an attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can begin to explore the world (Bretherton, 1992:759). According to Bretherton (ibid), Ainsworth is also instrumental in conceptualising the idea of maternal sensitivity to infant signals, especially in the development of infant-mother attachment patterns.

can no longer change what the child has assimilated when she returns into the child's life. He argued that if the attachment figure is broken or disrupted during the first two critical years, the child will suffer irreversible long-term consequences of maternal deprivation, including reduced intelligence, depression, proneness to criminal involvement and will struggle to adjust socially and emotionally (1969).

Furthermore, attachment theory is based on the idea that a child has an inborn need to attach or bond with one main person and that person should be his/her mother. However, research from the early eighties (Lamb, 1981) began to show that infants become attached to their fathers too, even though their bond is of a different kind. As we know at least in most societies, fathers build this attachment through active play. This surprised many because most American fathers spend most of their day time at work. The question then was how is this possible considering that Bowlby's attachment theory claims that a secure infant-mother attachment is only possible through regular physical and sensitive contact? According to Hewlett (1989:89-90) over 50 studies of middle-class American fathers showed that their vigorous play with infants is key in the formation of infant-father attachment. Furthermore, Frank Pedersen (1980:1) also makes an interesting observation that

...the father, as well as the mother, is a significant figure in the infant's social environment. This idea goes beyond traditional theory and research on early experience, which have focused almost exclusively on the mother-infant relationship. Studies of early influences on development have treated the mother as if she comprised the infant's entire social milieu, and theory has been concerned with mother and infant as if theirs was the only relationship infants formed.

The Western model which placed emphasis on mother-infant relationship is problematic particularly in contexts where care for young children is everyone's business. In most African societies, child care is shared among all those who interact with the infant/child. Among the Xhosa it is particularly important for someone who just entered the house to put his/her hand under his/her armpits and feet and make the baby sniff the odour. This not only helps relieve bad spirits such a person might have attracted from others 'out there', but helps to introduce an infant into the broader social context as smell is part of the way that infants adjust to the world around them. Pedersen (ibid) warns us though that in promoting an alternative model we should be careful not to downplay or commit the same mistake attachment theory committed and that is to dismiss other family members. The father-child relationships I am reporting in my thesis take place within a larger black society that values the contribution other kin members make to the child's

development and that contributes to shaping the ways that fatherhood is valued as a masculine trait and incorporated or excluded from men's repertoires.

### Conceptualising masculinities

The behaviour and actions of men today remind me of the famous words once uttered by Margaret Mead (1950:183), "Fathers are a biological necessity but a social accident." At the time she made this statement it was still rare if possible at all for women to fall pregnant without sexual intercourse with men. Therefore men were a necessity not only for sexual pleasure but for families and the larger society to reproducing and expand. But it seems even then men's behaviour and actions were already in question. Decades later her sentiments seem relevant. Similar sentiments run throughout the ethnographic accounts of the men I befriended. Their stories are a reflection of a larger problem in the country which has led some to declare fatherhood to be in a state of crisis. One of those is Trevor Davies, the director of the *African Fatherhood Initiative*, who raised the alarm in his commentary in 2013, calling all men in the country to stand up and defend our women and children. He wrote,

The fire threatening us all is the failure of our *African masculinity* to answer so many of the questions that are being asked of us by our women, our children and eventually ourselves. Violence against our women and children is not limited to any suburb, or to the poor, or to any fixed, imagined type of person you have in your head (Davies, 2013:1).

These strong words come at a time when prominent figures in the country, including the head of state, impregnate women outside of marriage with no intentions to marry them and sometimes culture<sup>42</sup> is used as justification by promiscuous men. All these have led to some, including the former President Thabo Mbeki, promoting the idea of 'moral regeneration' to protect vulnerable women and children and revitalise society.

In thinking about how masculinities are made and challenged, I draw on Raewyn Connell's (2005) idea of 'hegemonic masculinities'. Connell (2005: xviii) identifies a new approach in masculine studies which treats masculinity as a discursive construction. Influenced by Foucauldian post-structuralism, postmodernism and discursive psychology (Petersen, 1998; Wetherell & Edley, 1999 in Connell, *ibid*), this approach suggests that men are not permanently committed to a particular pattern of masculinity. Rather, they

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<sup>42</sup> Defined here loosely as a way of life that is passed from generation to generation.

make situationally specific choices from a cultural repertoire of masculine behaviour (Wetherell & Edley; 1999 in Connell, xix). Certainly we will encounter a lot of these choices among my informants, as I describe in chapter five, where there is an overlap between ‘boyhood’ and ‘manhood’ because the context is able to accommodate this interplay.

Hegemonic masculinity is thus influenced by men’s relationships with their friends, family members, community, and all those around them – and particularly (but not only) other men they hang out with. Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity dominates at a certain historical moment and so undermines other masculinities. Likewise, the men I worked with in Gugulethu expressed different ways of what it means for them to be a ‘real man’. Their construction of manhood is gritty. It involves being ‘a player’ (womaniser), valorising violence, and sometimes criminality. The discourse valorises impregnating women as there is strong social stigma when you don’t have children which is linked to a man’s chronological age. One is called by names such as *isishumane* (afraid of women), *amuzali* (infertile), *uchama amanzi* or *uyaphosa* (ejaculating water, missing the target – referring to a failure to impregnate) and being free/independent. (The latter is deeply ironic as the men I worked with can never be really free or independent because the majority of them still depend on their parents financially and for accommodation). The idea that many young men I know aspire to - to build their own house and start their own families - is an impossible desire (see also Honwana 2012). Connell’s idea of hegemonic masculinity is important because it acknowledges that masculinity is not predetermined but constructed within a specific social and historical context.

Mfecane makes this point strongly in his study in Bushbuckridge with men who are HIV-positive and have joined a support group. He argues that, in general

...men are in favour of practicing responsible lifestyles - such as using condoms, eating healthy food, having one sexual partner, abstaining from alcohol, and promoting gender equality. Yet such behaviour change simultaneously threatens taken-for-granted definitions and practices of masculinity.... [T]he ‘near-death experience’ (cf. Robins, 2005) from an AIDS illness, and commitment to the ‘disciplined’ lifestyle of therapeutic citizenship, do not necessarily result in a sustained change in masculine beliefs and practices or the abandonment of all previously higher-risk behaviour. ... [O]nce their health status improves many men wish to, and do, go back to their previous ‘manly’ lifestyles that they otherwise had to end with their HIV treatment (2011:131)

This points to the multiple models men mediate and the pressures to succumb to particular lifestyles as a man. I argue that in contexts of precarity, such as those that characterise the life worlds of the men with whom I worked, there is enormous pressure

to conform to valorised models of masculinity. The unemployment rate in South Africa has been consistently high, which, as Mkhize points out means many African males are unable to assume the social responsibilities associated with fatherhood” (Mkhize, 2006:184).<sup>43</sup> Again this is not entirely the fault of the youth but a structural obstacle which means not all young men are properly prepared to overcome.

Intimate relationships represent opportunities for individuals to build friendships with a particular chosen person(s). They provide space for individuals to learn about each other’s personalities, resolve problems when they arise as part of nurturing their relationships and get to know each other’s family members. Wood (1993) believes that like all other social experiences and interactions, intimate relationships are also gendered. He argues that

because women almost universally assume principal responsibility for relational maintenance and define relationships as central to their lives, and especially because women typically hold inequitable positions in close relationships, they are likely to see problems and to seek changes. However, men, who generally notice and attend less to relationship processes and who benefit from the inequities institutionalized in heterosexual relationships, have much to gain by maintaining the status quo and resisting changes (Wood, 1993:48-9).

A typical stereotypical view sees men as less emotional, lack sense of attachment to their partners and generally more likely not to be committed to the relationship. The above assessment is biased in that it assumes that when relationships fail it is because the man ‘messed up’. It is a view that shows detachment from reality which I take up in the thesis because I also worked with women who were also unfaithful to their partners. In fact, as we’ve seen in the previous chapter, Minazana caused all sorts of problems in her relationship with Sizwe because she is sleeping with his friends, undermining his status as a man in his community in the process. I return to this in chapter five.

In theorising about intimate relationships, Wood (1993) from the exchange school of thought state that social and personal relationships are commercial arrangements whereby participants compare benefits, costs, and outcomes to inform their decisions as to whether they should stay or leave. They are looking at relationships from a financial perspective. Often among those with whom I worked, relationships encounter challenges, experience fights, and sometimes violence and abusive behaviour,

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<sup>43</sup> However, Gwagwa (1998) believes that unemployment does not necessarily undermine the association between masculinity and control of money. It emerged from his work that women, especially in low paid jobs, continue to give their salaries to their husbands, and men are the ones who decide what should be bought. In other words, despite women’s access to money, hegemonic models of household relations continue to shape its disbursement.

and such events are regarded as normal. Sometimes these are considered as necessary as they indicate that a relationship is maturing, and should the participants overcome these problems and still be together, they are praised by friends. The 'down side' is that abuse was normalised<sup>44</sup>.

Hunter (2010:11) uses the concept of "gender," to "...represent a social hierarchy formed in relation to perceived biological differences in reproductive organs (differences themselves historically-geographically constructed)." The hierarchy he talks about is the one that gives power to men usually over women. Hunter (2010:11) believes that "gender is never simply "acted on" in simple ways. For instance, the employment of gender "rights" narratives helps to produce what we mean by gender rather than affecting a stable, predefined entity." In this thesis I use life stories and observations to show how the men who formed part of my sample in Gugulethu "...navigate, while simultaneously producing, intimate relationships..." (Hunter, 2010:5) in harsh living conditions under a democratic rule in South Africa. The living conditions these men find themselves make us question not just the meaning of democracy for them but also the ability of the family and the state to care for young children over time.

Hunter uses the term "intimacy" not to downplay violence against women by men but to be able to ...give attention to shifting notions of masculinities and femininities, questions around fertility, same-sex as well as female-male relations, matters of pleasure, and the vastly understudied sphere of love (Hunter, 2010:11.12). My thesis will show that, indeed the women that I worked with in Gugulethu also strongly believe in equality and being free in their relationships. Even though extra affairs are not openly discussed and agreed upon there is a clear understanding that each person can have extra 'wheels' in a relationship. The behaviour and actions of my informants' forces one to think about *intlonipho* (respect). In describing the narratives where their behaviour might be questioned, I raise concerns about the morality of this behaviour especially in a community where many were brought up in such strong values as respect for yourself and elders.

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<sup>44</sup> . I draw on my narratives to show that sometimes black women have no choice but to remain in such terrible treatment because of the ways they are brought up as children and communal expectations or as a sign of *intlonipho* (respect) to their fathers. Hunter (2010:9) shows how women draw on discourses of rights to actively contest intimate relations, including the use of condoms. He is able to show that in societies where women have always been oppressed and subordinated to men, when this changes they are able to use it for instance rights-based AIDS messages to argue that they also have equal rights and equality to have multiple boyfriends - an entitlement that men often claim is solely theirs.

The life stories and observations I draw on in my thesis show the extent to which men are willing to go so that they can be seen as performing and conforming to what it means to be 'a real man'. These include high risk activities such as unprotected sex with many different women, illegal activities, and drug-use. In their version of masculine identity, fathering was important, but responsibilities for care were less so, or were curtailed in specific ways. This suggests that it is important to consider the ways that the gendered relations of reproduction and care are materialised in given contexts; the discourses of masculinity that shape them; and the constraints that historical and contemporary political-economic relations impose. It is to these that I turn in the remainder of the thesis.

## Chapter Four

### **Ndiyindoda<sup>45</sup>! (I am man!): the making of African men and a cause of ethnic divisions**

In this chapter I offer an account of the construction of manhood among the Nguni societies in South Africa. This is because every society has different understandings, expectations and functions specific to men or women. Both men and sometimes women informants in my study talk about these in different ways and it has different consequences for relationships. Hence it is important to explain the specific processes and meanings of being a man in this society. The point one is making is that unlike the Western biological model of masculinity in which a man is a natural outgrowth of a boy – a product of chronology - in Nguni societies, men are culturally produced through a process of at least five different stages. One important aspect of this in Nguni societies is the role of initiation in the making of adult masculinity. While it is often erroneously thought that a boy becomes a man through initiation (including circumcision), as I show below, ideally for amaXhosa at least there are five stages. Despite this, and perhaps because my sample was relatively young in both chronological age and social status, initiation was a core element in their understandings of masculinity.

#### ***Ukuba yindoda (being a man): a contested terrain***

AmaXhosa, like all other societies, have been greatly affected by outside influences such as Christianity, urbanisation, globalisation and influence from the West brought with colonialism and apartheid. One way this manifests is in a set of cultural distinctions between ‘Red’ and ‘School’ amaXhosa. For example, Zolani Ngwane’s (2001:402) work in villages in the former Transkei shows “...the consequences of global neo-liberalism in local contexts.” Ngwane’s work builds on and complicates Mayer’s (1961) study in East London in the Eastern Cape, which showed how amaXhosa identity and tribal affiliations shifted with the emergence of ‘School’ people who hold western

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<sup>45</sup> These are the “sacred words” every young Xhosa man entering initiation ritual must pronounce soon after the removal of his foreskin as acknowledgement of what just happened to him but also as a sign of belonging.



ideals, the influence of Christianity and schooling. In making sense of the tensions he observed between older men and younger men, Ngwane (2001:402-403) remarks that

What drew my attention almost immediately were unusually high levels of generational conflicts, particularly between men of thirty-five years and older and those from about seventeen to thirty years old. At the discursive level the conflicts turned on an articulation, on the one hand, of images of progress and modernization associated with schooling with, on the other, images of masculine social subjectivity institutionalized in the male initiation rite. For example, the older men disapprovingly referred to the young men as 'the educated', 'the schooled', 'of the school', 'the teachers', '*imiphunzo yentaba*' (premature births)<sup>46</sup>, and 'girls'-thus associating schooling with lack of proper manhood. The young men, on their own part, appeared to appropriate some of the same images like 'the schooled', 'the educated', 'the civilized' to refer to themselves-clearly locating the concepts in a different semantic register where they referenced positive and progressive identities-while reserving for their elders the more pejorative terms such as 'barbarians', 'circumcised boys', 'simple natives', 'Xhosas', and 'boys with grey hair'. Here it is the lack of proper schooling on the part of the older men that is associated with improper manhood.

These conflicts point to the impact of historical processes on *ordinary people* in remote villages. Such conflicts and insults often lead to horrific untimely deaths among men in heated debates where, in defending one's social status, proving one's identity and masculinity, egos rise above sober reasoning. Entering into these sensitive conversations requires a high level of care which I believe I mastered in the field without offending the men I worked with. Our groups were very diverse<sup>47</sup> and could have easily led to confrontations. One of the core areas that emerged in our discussions revolved around the relation between 'proper manhood' and initiation.

### **Background to *ukwaluka* (initiation)**

The initiation process is basically a rite of passage. It is a process that is intended to mark the transition from one phase of life (boyhood) to another (manhood) and in such a process certain conditions have to be fulfilled for it to be recognised.

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<sup>46</sup> The term *umiphunzo* (singular) used here means an animal that gave birth prematurely. In Xhosa it is an insult to refer to another person this way.

<sup>47</sup> I performed my initiation (including circumcision) in the countryside – as I show, an important differentiator in understandings of the 'properness' of initiation – and all my informants were initiated in Cape Town. As alluded to earlier in the text, we also had an uninitiated man amongst ourselves who provided accommodation and a convenient meeting space for all of us. Interestingly, in an unplanned group conversation on circumcision in Sizwe's presence, the initiated men never had problems in discussing the matter. This was very interesting to me because I know that in the countryside it is not permitted to happen. *Amakhwenkwe* (boys) know about circumcision, but they ought never be in conversation with initiated men about it.

The practice of *ukwaluka*<sup>48</sup> (male initiation/ circumcision) I offer below is considered a secret, with some of the view that we should not be writing about it in public discourse because it is a sensitive aspect of our culture. However, the ritual is now a public issue because of all the deaths that young men endure and exposure through the media. The most contentious of the latter was a very graphic and controversial television programme called *Umtshunzi Wentaba* (Shadow of the Mountain) shown on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in 2007. Due to public outcry and opposition “to the graphic portrayal of circumcision” from the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, the National Heritage Council and ANC chief whip Mathole Motshega, the SABC had to cancel its viewing until an edited version was approved later (2010-12-05, page 1. <http://www.citypress.co.za>). The media and interventions by the national Department of Health, in particular, have publicised “the secrets”. I am therefore engaging in a public discourse which I am very familiar with as a Xhosa man. I neither support its publicity nor condone the loss of innocent lives of the young men. I offer this discussion so that the reader who might not be familiar with this ritual can understand its social meaning and implications for the men with whom I worked in Gugulethu. The failure of older men to step up and protect the integrity of this sacred ritual means even women now know more about what happens “in the bush”, making this a public issue. Besides, if men know so much about birth in our days what would stop women from learning about *ukwaluka*? Nevertheless, I do not disclose details that are still considered secret: rather, I offer an ideal-type account interspersed with observations from my own experience and those of my research participants.

In describing *ukwaluka*, a rite of passage into manhood, I will confine my discussion to only AmaXhosa. AmaZulu have not practiced *ukwaluka* since Shaka’s time, although some might now be doing it privately through the health institutions because the national department of health is encouraging all men in South Africa to get circumcised for health reasons<sup>49</sup>. One of the two Zulu men in my sample, Sizwe, has not

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<sup>48</sup> Some terms referring to this process are used interchangeably and sometimes it is not clear what people are actually referring to until further explanation is given. For example, the term *ukwaluka* (initiation), *wolusive* or *udlangine* (he has been circumcised/initiated) may refer to the act of foreskin cutting but also means the initiation procedure has happened. As Vivian (2008:13) warns, the term “initiation” (the Xhosa term – *ukwaluka*) is ambiguous because “it also refers to the induction of a healer, which, of course, does not involve circumcision per se.” In her work she prefers the term circumcision to refer to *ukwaluka* to avoid this confusion and overlap. I follow her usage.

<sup>49</sup> Circumcision has been shown to reduce HIV infection. The Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini has supported circumcision. In an interview with CNN in 2010 (1 July, page 1) he stated “I don't want to lose

been initiated; therefore he remains *inkwenkwe* (a boy) in the eyes of Xhosa men in my group. The second man, Ntemie, whose mother is Zulu and his father is Xhosa, chose to be initiated 'in the Xhosa way' before his father died. Ntemie sees himself as a Xhosa man because of patrilineal descent in the same manner Sizwe sees himself as Zulu. The Sotho people also do practice *ukwaluka* but the Sotho man in the study, Mabhanti, was also initiated 'in the Xhosa way'. He says he chose to go with his Xhosa friend and his father, a Sotho man, agreed to his request.<sup>50</sup>

Initiation is a long collective process which involves many people from the clan, and the community at large. Clan members, both men and women, must be invited and informed about the plans so that they also feel valued by *usosuthu* (father of the initiate) to-be. Not much is expected from relatives in terms of contributions such as beer, goat, sheep, food, and alcohol during *umngeno* (the "going in" [preparations for seclusion] of the initiate). But their presence and assistance is important for the success and dignity of the ceremony. It also signifies the clan's unity. Clan members, just like other community members, are expected (and sometimes required) to make contributions to the *umphumo* (the coming out of the initiate), such as bringing in *umqombothi* (traditional beer) and food. Other people who play an important role in this process include the village headman (*usibonda*), *ingcibi* (the surgeon), *ikbankatha* (the initiate guardian), and *inqalathi* (a young boy or boys assisting the initiate). I explain their specific roles below.

Finally, in cases where *usosuthu* is not alive or present in the child's life, the grandfather or the child's uncle from the mother's side take over this role. The *usosuthu* was responsible for the logistics of the initiation process and the economic preparations (Lamla, 2005:6). During this process he becomes the host of his community at *emzini wakhe* (his homestead). All men look forward to such occasions. A man's wealth is displayed and recognised in occasions like this through the amount of food and alcohol he offers to his fellow villagers for embracing his ceremony in his household as the head of the homestead. In other words, this is an important site in which a young man's father's masculinity and status are acknowledged. The other most important person is the initiate's mother, *unozibazana*. Ideally, one person is chosen to cook for *umkhwetha* and for the duration of the ritual she is expected *ukuba makazile* (avoid sexual intercourse and

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any of my Zulu people. As I've revived this circumcision, I'm showing my love to my people. Let's hold our hands together. But you young ones, accept - listen to your king's call" (Gwala, 2010:1).

<sup>50</sup> His father now lives with a Xhosa woman after he separated from Mabhanti's Sotho mother. This may have had something to do with his stance.

limit her interaction with people considered witches). It is often erroneously said that *unozibazana* cooks the food of the initiate. Ideally, she should not touch the food of *umkhwetha*. Instead, someone else, especially the initiate's sister, cooks for him.

Another person who is heavily involved is *iqgirha* (a traditional healer). The *iqgirha* is either invited to protect the initiates in the bush before circumcision takes place or the father would secretly take his son(s) to his place to receive protections against evil that might cause harm to the initiates. Sometimes *ingcibi*<sup>51</sup> (the surgeon) may perform the role of *ukuqinisa umkhwetha* (to give protective herbs against evil to the initiate). The *iqgirha* is responsible for "...strengthening the traditional surgeon and ridding him of potential evil spirits which he could pass on to initiates if not attended to. To do this, the traditional healer makes small scarifications (*iintlanga*) on the major joints of the surgeon and applies traditional medicine to these" (Vincent, 2008:12). This shows the importance of a well-planned initiation process in preparing and protecting the initiates. The involvement of so many people shows that even at later stages in one's life that sense of communal belonging never diminishes.

### Five stages of manhood

The first stage of manhood, *ubukhwetha* (initiation), is preceded by a boy doing *ukuguya* (celebrations). *Ukuguya* is a stage where the boys who will be going through the initiation process celebrate with their friends, giving and receiving goodbye wishes from them. *Amakhwenkwe* (boys) wear their *imibhaco*<sup>52</sup> (traditional attire); they dance, drink *umqombothi* (traditional beer), bring wood from the bushes as part of the preparations, and play *iintonga* (stick fight games). Lamla (2005:6) states that the decision as to when to send a boy for initiation lies mainly with the boy himself, but his father's wishes are also important. We have already seen Mabhanti's choice to be initiated 'the Xhosa way' and his Sotho father's agreement. The main consideration is that the boy has to show

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<sup>51</sup> Like in my case he is the one who performs this function. It is a family practice because he also took over from his father who showed him the herbs. He is very good even to protect against *izulu* (the lightning – people are killed by witches who play with *izulu*). One night in my *bhuma* I had women talking outside and soon started feeling sick but they were never able to come inside. It was believed that they had come to *ukundithwebula* (to take someone alive and either leave behind his imaginary person or nothing at all. Such people who are *abathwetyulweyo* (abducted) are never found).

<sup>52</sup> *Umbaco* used to be made out of animal skin and nicely decorated with beads but now boys use their old trousers like jeans by sticking different colours on it.

maturity<sup>53</sup> and readiness because boyish misdemeanours, such as misbehaving, not sleeping at home, accepted from a boy would not be tolerated from a man. A boy could never enjoy certain privileges only reserved for initiated men such as getting married, irrespective of his age; eating with other men in traditional ceremonies; performing certain rituals; and being elected to leadership positions in his community. Among the amaXhosa, a boy is regarded as *inja* (a dog) and can never address or lead elders. Thus, as long as a boy is not traditionally initiated, he can never be regarded as a full person (a complete person) in the community (Mager, 1998:660). Therefore, it is every boy's wish to graduate from this stage so as to become a full member of his community with all the rights and entitlements of masculinity this enables.

Meanwhile, the father of the boy to be initiated, in consultation with his kinsmen, would discuss and decide on the appointment of *ikbankatha*<sup>54</sup> (the initiate guardian). This appointment is a well-considered decision<sup>55</sup> because this man has duties and responsibilities to help in moulding and producing a good man out of the initiate. The family will appoint a man with good social and moral standing in the community whom the initiate can look up to as a role model. An initiate generally develops a life-long relationship with his *ikbankatha* who expects to be invited or given *ibambidlani*<sup>56</sup> (what you ate /drank on your journey back home) when the initiate returns from the cities for holidays usually in December for Christmas. An incorrect appointment of *ikbankatha*, with a combination of other factors could easily lead to what Thando Mggolozana (2009) describes as a 'failed man'. I return to his argument later in the chapter.

Another person that must be appointed prior the initiation is the *ingcibi* (initiate surgeon). The practice of being *ingcibi* was traditionally a calling and a gift but in some instances he was appointed by the chief and elders (Pauw, 1994:14). *Ingcibi* is paid<sup>57</sup> for

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<sup>53</sup> This is no longer necessarily the case. Some mothers send their boys to initiation before they even reach 18 years, an age considered to be the exit point from childhood, because there might be no initiated man in the house to lead family matters.

<sup>54</sup> The boy has no say on this matter, it is for elders.

<sup>55</sup> If the father of the initiate is a migrant labourer who does not know much about the behaviour of his village men, he relies on the views and assessment of his kinsmen.

<sup>56</sup> When a migrant worker returns home, home being the village and birth place, those living in his village expect him to bring back alcohol and meat which will be shared with his friends over a social gathering (see MacAllister 2003 & 1980: 53-4; Ngwane 2003).

<sup>57</sup> In my case my father paid R350. Sometimes the *incibi* is given alcohol and meat in addition to the monetary payment, although this was not the case with the *incibi* responsible for my initiation. He is a well-respected man like his father. He does not even come to your house, where he can be contaminated with

his role and others also ask for alcohol and meat. The *Ingcibi* performs the initiation, using *umdlanga* (assegai) to remove *ijwabi* (the prepuce). *Amanqalathi* (the young boys who assist the initiate) are not appointed but avail themselves. They do not have to be related in terms of blood (clan clustering) to the initiate. Young boys find this role exciting even though there is no payment to it.

Once all the preparations as explained above are complete, the process to manhood begins with the slaughtering of a goat or cow. In cases like mine, because I am a twin, it is mandatory to slaughter a cow. The boy is shaved and given a new, distinctive blanket, *ingcawe* (all white blanket with one or two black/red lines on the edges). Naked, he covers himself with this blanket.<sup>58</sup> The initiate will eat *umshwamo* (piece of the meat from the slaughtered animal's right leg) with no salt. Then *ubukhwetha* (initiation), the first stage of manhood, begins once the boy has been taken to the bush where he will be circumcised.

When boys enter the initiation period, they are described as *amakhwenkwe asehlathini* (boys who are in the bush). This does not always mean the real bush with trees. This phrase is used as an umbrella term to indicate the seclusion<sup>59</sup> of the initiates. In many villages there are no bushes<sup>60</sup> nearby in the Eastern Cape and *abakhwetha* (the initiates) are sent as far as possible from communal life, hence seclusion. It is a way of declaring the youth as being outside the domestic realm, in a liminal period.

The initiation part is as painful as it can be. The literature on initiation and masculine identity-making surprisingly quiet on the value of pain in the making of a man. Based on my personal experience and contemporary debates among isiXhosa-speakers, pain is an essential marker in the making and production of men in Nguni society. Signs

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evil spirits and witchcraft, but goes straight to your completed *bhuma* and sends the boy left there to look after it to report to the elders and bring the initiate to be.

<sup>58</sup> *Ingcawe* is also used to wrap the body of a deceased person before the body is placed inside the coffin. This was done as a sign of respect. In earlier times, the covering was the skin of a beast slaughtered for the deceased.

<sup>59</sup> For instance, in my case we have mountains nearby where most initiates have their *amabhuma* (plural - round huts used during the ritual seclusion period) built. The mountains have baboons that often come inside the *ibhuma* (singular) at night especially on days where you have meat. Most of the baboons in my area are believed to be owned by men who are believed to be involved in witchcraft in our villages, as such, the owners know which huts have meat and when. Once they enter inside we are always advised to keep quiet and not make any movement; 'even if it sits on you' *nyamezela* (hold on)', initiates are warned.

<sup>60</sup> Even in places where you had bushes, they have since been destroyed either by fire or people chopping it for wood fire at home.

indicating that one is unable to handle pain have serious implications for one's future social standing. Pain is an important marker in one's ability to endure hardships in the bush but also in life. The saying '*indoda ayikhal'* (a man does not cry) is a way of discouraging men from expressing their feelings through crying. The amount of pain involved from the initiation until one is fully healed is beyond measure. No anaesthetics are allowed throughout the process and should one be seen/heard make noise he will be labelled as *usisi* (a sisi), *umfazt*<sup>61</sup> (a married woman), indicating that one is not strong enough or 'not man enough' (*sisifede*). For one to be considered *indoda yenene* ('a real man'), one has to overcome this brutal but rewarding process.

Language is another defining characteristic because one can easily tell where you have been initiated by the terms one uses. Most importantly it demonstrates *ukwazile ukunyamezela* (that you were able to withstand the pain). Just as women go through excruciating natural birth, men go through a social-cultural transformation. Pain is thus an important test in the production of men among the Nguni-speaking communities who practice circumcision.

Despite the centrality and valorisation of pain, some boys do not see what happens to them during initiation because they are 'dead' due to alcohol overdose. I have observed and assisted many boys taken to the bush in wheelbarrows because they have consumed alcohol and other drugs so that they do not see the circumcision. In fact, Mayatula and Mavundla (1997:18) report in their study that alcohol use prior to, and after, the procedure in attempt to ease pain, has been implicated in excessive bleeding sometimes leading to death. Areas that have no history of practising *ukwaluka* are most affected by the deaths, amputations and 'failed manhood'. For things to go smoothly, one needs a responsible *khankatha* and well managed support structure. In my case, I was assisted by my brother who, even though there was an appointed man as my *ikhankatha*, was always there to make sure I was well looked after.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The belief that women are weak and cannot withstand pain is misleading. It shows men's arrogance and lack of understanding the pain women going through for instance when giving birth but also the emotional pain many African women endure in marriages. As alluded to earlier in chapter 1, my mother lost her baby because she was not given time to care for her. Her mother-in-law hated my mother because she wanted my father to marry another woman but my mother *wanyamezela* (she persevered). What is needed from us men is to understand why someone would go through such pain when her parents are still alive and could have easily provided for her.

<sup>62</sup> The more I wanted water without *ithuthu* (wood ash), the less sleep I had because I needed to change my *isichwe* quite often than normal. On the eighth day, the day of *ukosisa* (slaughtering of a sheep to allow me

When a boy is circumcised (*idlangwa* - foreskin cutting), other men take off their *iminqwazi* (hats) as a sign of respect to *isiko* (the ritual). So critical is the question of publicly withstanding pain that any man who was initiated in hospital would be publicly humiliated by being ordered to stay behind in the kraal and cook the meat for *amadoda* (real men). If men were polite enough to allow him to come to the bush, he will be asked to sit far from the initiate and other men and only join them on their return to the village.

As soon as *ingcibi* finishes, the initiate must pronounce the words after the surgeon *Ndiyindado!* (I am a man!)<sup>63</sup>. This is a critical moment in testing one's ability to withstand pain and still show a brave face to other men because, due to the pain just been experienced, one's voice is likely to be shaky. The worst thing that can happen is to cry. Crying is regarded as a sign of weakness, and it immediately raise eyebrows about the initiate's ability to withstand pain going forward because the pain due to the cutting off of the foreskin is nothing compared to the pain that will follow until one is fully healed. The pain inflicted on the initiate differentiates men from the villages and those who circumcise in urban areas. To men from initiated in the villages, men who are initiated in urban areas are considered "not men enough" because they do not experience the amount and intensity of the pain we go through there. This explains some of the controversy around the state's suggestion that circumcision be undertaken in hospitals.

In the villages *ikbankatha* and young boys assisting *umkhwetha* with tasks such as bringing food, preparing *ingceke/ikota* (white ochre), and search for *izichwe* (plural - a green leaf that is placed around *isiko*<sup>64</sup> (the wound) before it is wrapped in brown paper and *ityeba* (belt made out of a goat skin). *Isichwe* (singular) sticks on the wound and it must be removed and a new one placed every 10 to 15 minutes 24 hours a day<sup>65</sup>). The

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to go outside, search for *izichwe* and eat any food) I was almost healed. It took me five more days afterwards to heal properly and stop the wrapping completely.

<sup>63</sup> The drunken ones never get to say this and one will always be reminded of this day by his friends and other men especially in conflict situations. In our village my brothers and I stand in good position even from the elders because we never touched alcohol, a sign of a strong man with big heart, even though we had plenty of it available to us. In my case there were 19 bottles of brandy excluding beer cases and *umqombothi*. It must be said that while there can be bad treatment and lack of care of initiates in seclusion, their intoxication and body shock to a complete new way of life plays a part in them landing in hospital. Because of the pain some do not tend to their wound until it is too late and these are the ones who are quick to blame others when things go wrong. One has to be mentally and physically ready for *ukwaluka* because it is not child's play.

<sup>64</sup> We call the wound *isiko* (literally meaning a ritual but here it's a way of talking indirectly about the wound to give respect to the entire process. All references are indirect; one does not even point a finger at the wound).

<sup>65</sup> Sleeping is considered a luxury; you hardly get a chance to take a nap.



wrapping and undoing of the wound is called *ukutyama*. Failing to remove *isichwe* as often as possible makes the wound wet, hence delaying the healing process. The removal of *isichwe* is similar to spilling spirit to an open wound; it feels like fire. Those initiated in urban contexts generally do not go through this process. For them, these changes (wrapping and unwrapping) happens twice a day, very early in the morning and again early evening<sup>66</sup>. In fact, in the urban context even *ikbankatha* does not stay with the initiate the whole day because he does not need to. In the countryside, *ikbankatha* stays for eight days until the day of *ukojiswa* (roasting – the slaughtering of a sheep in the bush that marks the end of the initiate’s confinement to his *ibhuma*<sup>67</sup>). In those first eight days, the initiate does not touch anything or use his hands for anything else other than to care/treat his penis. He is instructed so to avoid contamination. While some suggest that it has to do with taboo, it is understood by those with whom I have spoken as being a matter of “pure hygiene”. *Ikbankatha* will feed him using a sharpened stick on the edge (if eating meat and a spoon for *umqgusho* - samp) and also give him water which is mixed with *uthuthu* (ash). He must sip as little as possible. The idea is to keep the initiates body as dry as possible which is believed to be good for his manhood to stay dry and heal fast. His food does not have salt or anything that might encourage erection and slow healing. From the day of *ukojiswa* (roasting), he would be allowed to eat any food he likes with salt and he can now drink clean water as well. The process of continuous tight wrapping and unwrapping of the penis also means by the end of the healing process one’s manhood is also thought to have increased in size<sup>68</sup>.

‘In the bush’ *umkhwetha* (singular – the initiate) would be taught a whole host of ways a man should conduct himself by his *ikbankatha*. To avoid ritual pollution, he is expected to avoid going back to the village during the initiation period and beyond. In the past, the initiation period took a full year, starting in the winter month of June (*inyanga yesilimela*), and finishing the following winter. *Ubukhwetha* was more than just healing the inflicted wound, but about teachings, moulding and preparing the initiate for the life ahead. This is common knowledge and widely reported in public media and

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<sup>66</sup> Some are known to make use of betadine ointment which makes them less men in social standing to us because it neutralises the pain one experiences.

<sup>67</sup> Note in some areas they call it *ibhoma* but in my area and the men I worked with in Gugulethu we call it *ibhuma*.

<sup>68</sup> As a young boy I did not understand when initiated men used to say *inkwenkwe ayinobambelana nendoda entombini* (a boy can never compete with an initiated man in women – sexually or in bed). Those who perform this ritual in urban contexts are considered unlikely to see such benefits because the process of tending to the wound is foreshortened.

scholarly literature. My argument here is that the literature has underplayed the role of the ability to withstand pain in the process of making and becoming a man.

The Xhosa circumcision practice has received a lot of media attention in recent years because of all the wrong things that have become synonymous with it. In *A Man Who is Not A Man* (2009), Thando Mgqolozana provides a rich narrative of how a botched circumcision distorted not only a young man's penis but his social status. This young university graduate, who is umXhosa himself, takes us through the journey into how to survive after you 'fail to enter manhood' in a traditional Xhosa sense of the word. It tells a story of how the *umkhwetha* (the initiate's) circumcision ritual went wrong (2009: 1-2), resulting in hospitalisation and penile amputation. It is such failures, and the increasing number of deaths during the initiation period, that make it possible to have a public debate about what many still consider a sacred cultural ritual. However, when *ukwaluka* is done properly and sensibly as in my case, it gives one a great sense of pride to have overcome what our grandparents have also defeated.

To make and produce a 'real man' in Nguni society, is a complex process which is demanding physically and mentally to the initiate. The young man must overcome the fear and pain of liminality and circumcision and manage the healing process carefully. I have indicated that some of the boys would rather be "dead" than see this procedure. He must overcome the constant excruciating pain being inflicted by *isichwe* and wrapping and unwrapping of the wound. He must show respect through learning a new language. Manhood in this process is thus an acquired status and not achieved only through chronological age. Silverman (2004: 421) state that *ukwaluka* involves 'physical brutality, seclusion, testing, esoteric knowledge, death and rebirth imagery, name changes, dance, masked costumes, and dietary and sexual taboos.' A well-known Xhosa author, Peter Mtuze (2004:41) sees *ukwaluka* as a '...gateway to manhood in the same way that baptism is the gateway to Christianity' (2004:41). It is true that there are slight differences on how the practice of *ukwaluka* is performed in different areas.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Vincent (2008:14) writes that the stripping of the boys clothing (blankets) "...symbolically [marks] the break with boyhood and the entry into a transitional phase en route manhood." My interpretation differs. I propose a materialist argument; that the stripping

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<sup>69</sup> For example, Wilson (1952:200) states that after the foreskin is removed, the initiate's father would give it to him to swallow. I have heard such stories many times especially when I was still a boy but consider this an insult that humiliates and undermines "other" people's culture. What happens to the foreskin is kept secret to discourage witchcraft.

of youths is to enable water to be thrown at them so as to enable the *ingcibi* to grasp their foreskins. To be considered a real man among the Xhosas one must avoid anything to do with hospitals. Those who go there first for the foreskin removal are considered *amadoda wephepha* (paper men) or *amadoda kaNesi* (Nurse's men).

The second stage of manhood is *ubukrwala* (the stage of being a new man). *Ubukrwala* is marked by the burning of the *ibhuma* and everything the initiate was using while there such as his blankets, pots, cups and everything he might have had while there would be burnt and destroyed<sup>70</sup>. Before the burning of *ibhuma*, the initiate runs naked to the river to wash, his blankets left behind, and his whole body painted with white *ikota* (ochre). He is chased by boys and young men until he gets to the river. The white ochre is washed away in the running river and with it, bad luck. The chasing of the initiate to the river gives boys and other young men a chance to beat him if he does not outrun them with their sticks. But as soon as he enters the water, all the boys stay far from him and only other men surround him. This is done to ensure that boys do not see his now circumcised penis<sup>71</sup>. On his way back to his *ibhuma*, men will sing a song called *somagwaza ndakugwaza ngalo mkhonto* (*Somagwaza* I will stab you with this spear) while also playing *iintonga* (stick fight games) showing off their skills. This is one of the legal places where the men or boys who undermine each other are given an opportunity to fight their differences. *Iintonga* are not seen as dangerous weapons. If someone takes out a knife or any other weapon, he will be disarmed and beaten by sticks by everyone because to use a knife is seen as a sign of cowardice, a wish to kill. *Ubukrwala* is the only time where *somagwaza* is sung, unlike other Xhosa songs which are sang during celebrations, in mourning, and going to wars.

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<sup>70</sup> I have seen some valuable items, such as the three-leg pot, usually returned home before men from the community arrive for the burning of *ibhuma*, which means these days not everything the initiate owned is being destroyed. Whether this act has any impact on the new men these days behaving like boys is not something that seems to be taken seriously or talked about. But I believe that if the intention was to leave everything behind when entering this new stage in life we must reflect on such matters.

<sup>71</sup> This becomes interesting in cases where one is a twin with girls as I am. In my case, my twin sister and our *imfusi* (a child who is born after the twins) ran together but I was always ahead of them. My twin and *imfusi* ran with me to the river, also painted in white ochre. I had to run ahead of them so that they could not see my manhood. Even during the initiation stage they accompanied me, covered by their white *ingcawe*. *Ingcibi* started by imitating on them before I was circumcised which put more pressure on me not to cry because it is not often that women are present at this stage. This is one such instance. Furthermore, when one of us dies, before the deceased will be lowered into the grave, the remaining one will have to go inside the grave and lay there, imitating what his/her part will do, for a few seconds. Where this is not done, the mourners might encounter problems. In my village where such instance happened, we spent about 5 hours trying to lower the coffin but it would not fit. The grave kept narrowing down despite all the measurements we were taking. This was solved by an old man who asked if the deceased was a twin and after her brother was lowered down we were able to lower the coffin with ease.

After washing, the initiate will slowly walk, naked and surrounded by other men, back to his *ibhuma* which is still standing at this time. Once he gets to his *ibhuma*, he will be given a new blanket of any colour and would wrap all his body after being buttered from head to toe with fat. He will be given a stick and his blanket will hide his face, limiting his vision. He is not allowed to look back as is believed that is bad luck for him to see his *ibhume* smoke when it burns down.

The burning of *ibhuma* and destruction of everything that he owned while there symbolises that he is now moving to a new stage in life. All he owned as a boy must be left behind. So too, boyish behaviour. The clothes he owned as a boy are given to other people or his brothers so that anything that links to the past is destroyed.

Once the crowd reaches his home, *ikrwala* will sit down in his father's kraal and would be given a beer to take a sip<sup>72</sup> before he goes to the house where other young men will stay with him the whole night singing, teaching him how to dance 'as a man' (*ukuxhentsa*), and drinking. Unmarried women also form part of this gathering and this occasion presents opportunities to be seen by men for marriage. Very early in the morning, around 3am, *ikrwala* will go to the river to bath with his *ikbankatha* with his face and body already painted with *imbola ebomvu* (red ochre). The use of the red ochre at this stage marks adulthood.<sup>73</sup> He will use this red ochre until he leaves his village to return to the work place. Once the sun is up, elders will do *ukuyala* (giving the new man advice and warnings on what to expect in life and also reminding him not to behave like he used to as a boy), which marks the beginning of *umgidi* (the welcoming back ceremony of a new man through drinking alcohol, eating food, singing and dancing). The new man will be given gifts in monetary form during *ukuyala*<sup>74</sup>, and sometimes even cows and clothes to start his own herd of cattle. It is during *ukuyalwa* and *ukusoka* (giving away of gifts to the new man and sometimes to his *ikbankatha* - the initiate guardian) that relatives make their contributions.

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<sup>72</sup> One big container, usually a 5 litre, is used to drink *umqombothi*. Unlike in the Western world where every person receives their glass to drink from, black people share amongst themselves from the same container. This is part of the communal life which emphasise the importance of togetherness. It is only recently that I have observed those with sores on their lips being given their own containers to drink from so that whatever they have does not spread to everyone.

<sup>73</sup> Red ochre is also used during other traditional ceremonies whereas white ochre is mainly used for instance by *abakhwetha* (plural) (traditional healers/initiates).

<sup>74</sup> This is a unique opportunity for elders to tell this young man directly if they were not happy with his behaviour as a boy. He is warned to change his bad ways of life and throughout this period he is not allowed to talk back or look elders in the face, he must look down all the time.

Another important stage for *ikrwala* (singular- a new man) is *ukosula* ('to wipe off'). *Ukosula* means a new man 'from the bushes' must have sexual intercourse with a female to 'wipe off' all the bad luck he might have. This woman must not be the one he intends to marry. If he had a girlfriend before going for initiation, he must now intentionally avoid having sex with her before he has sex with another woman. At this stage he is still using *imbola ebomvu* (red ochre) so the woman he will sleep with will have some stains in her body or clothes, unless she is really careful to avoid it. Sexual intercourse ought to be consensual. The first time he has sex after the initiation is also known as *ukutesta* (to test, a term vernacularised from the English verb), i.e. to test his manhood. In times of high HIV infections, certain aspects of the Xhosa initiation practice such as *ukosula* might need revisiting. The pressure put on young men to engage in this sexual activity place them and young women at high risk of infection because the understanding is to have unprotected sex to fulfil its purpose. For young men to engage in this activity brings about social acknowledgement/recognition and dignity. It forms a key part of being a real man. He publicises the woman he slept with by bragging to his friends<sup>75</sup>. In these communal settings some of the girls are known to have "a thing" for *amakrwala* (new men). For these women, it is also about bragging to their friends that she is the first woman the *ikrwala* slept with out of the whole village girls<sup>76</sup>. Some of these women sleep with *ikrwala* so that she can undermine the woman he might chose to marry by saying *I know your husband I am the one he slept with first* especially if the married woman is from another village, and thus seen as taking "our men".

The *ikrwala* is clearly identifiable. He dresses differently from other men. His attire used to be formal clothes with a round hat and stick. He does not wear shoes in the villages unlike in the urban context. Every day he must go and fetch the village animals from all the nearby houses in the morning and bring them back from the mountain or

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<sup>75</sup> The flip side of this is that if such a woman is known or suspected to have slept with HIV-positive men or she is suspected to be infected, then the new man's social status will also have a bad name hanging over it. My ownousin (*umzala nam*), mother's brother's son, whom we initiated together – he was brought in on the 8<sup>th</sup> day during *umojiso nam* – had a girlfriend in my village after we can back. Because we both did not live in the village as I was a student in Grahamstown and he was working in Johannesburg, we did not know much about the village secrets. He slept with a young girl and only learnt of her HIV status afterwards. Three years later he passed away from an AIDS-related illness. The young woman had already died by then. I believe that at this point in time this aspect of our culture needs to be reviewed. Our society cannot afford to be forcing young men to have unprotected sex so that their maleness could be socially recognised. This point has nothing to do with the practice of *ukwaluka* as a cultural practice.

<sup>76</sup> Of course there is hope on their side that the *ikrwala* might carry on with the relationship and eventually marry her.

veldt in the evening. This is his first service to his community and boys will have free time to play because this is their responsibility throughout the year. These days, the *ikrwala* attire reflects the current trends in fashion. Young men bring different styles from the cities and these are shunned by elders who resist or see them as disrespectful to the tradition. It is generally expected that he wears the distinctive attire as long as possible especially if he has not moved out of the village.

The third stage is *ubufana* (to be a young man). This stage begins about a year after the initiation to ten years thereafter. *Umfana* (singular – a young man) has all the rights and privileges attached to men. He is expected to marry and start his own family. He can also partake in all community activities from which children are excluded, such as digging graves for the dead, building *amabhoma* (initiate huts), attending community meetings and many other communal activities. Once married, he is also ‘promoted’ to eat and drink with older men in traditional ceremonies, a sign of respect to him as the head of his own house. However, older men with more *izilimela*<sup>77</sup> as initiated men will have more privileges, such as the most delicious meat, more beer and larger quantities in everything (Pauw, 1994:63). This is an important stage for a man to start having children of his own if he does not have them already. Ideally, a man should only start having children once married. So there is a clear social expectation that being initiated comes with expectation that you are eligible to get *umfazazi* (a wife) and then children<sup>78</sup> of your own. Having children before you get married is not socially sanctioned. The majority of the men I worked with therefore have broken this expectation, just like many other men these days. Initiation is profoundly about preparing a man to take on responsibilities of a father in his homestead.

The fourth stage is *ubudoda* (to be a man). A clear physical marker of this stage is ones physical appearance of a grown man and his approach/conduct, particularly his engagement in greeting others. Unlike the younger generation, *indoda* normally has a keen interest in learning about others’ well-being during exchange in greetings whereas with

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<sup>77</sup> The way that initiated men count years is measured in an annual cycle from the month of initiation, usually June.

<sup>78</sup> I know from my personal experience that men who follow this process receive great respect in the village; you are considered ‘a strong real man’ who is not persuaded by peer pressure. In my village the respect I receive from the village elders might also be linked to my education and non-use of alcohol. With the latter, elders often clash with young men on how much the latter receive *umqombothi* compare to the communal work they perform such as digging graves which elders no longer physically have the strength. Often these conflicts play themselves out in public where young men refuse to dig graves for certain families that are considered to be ‘against’ young men.

the youth such exchanges are very short. *Indoda* (a man) is no longer directly involved in physical labour such as *ukuxhela* (to slaughter), making fire, and being *umthungi* (the one assigned to dish out food and refill beer containers for elders). This man is now called in the community *tata*<sup>79</sup> (father) by children and sometimes even by his wife. He has his own homestead and he takes a leading role in his own rituals or those of his sons. These are the men who are often appointed as the chief advisors and assistants. These men can still perform physically demanding duties but their seniority exempts them. They provide guidance and advice to younger men. For instance, they might take over in cases where young men are unable to break a rock while grave-digging, showing their wealth of experience by not abandoning a grave because of the rock underneath. The involvement of younger men in the chief's court might be to take horses and deliver messages to other villages while also expected to be learning through observation. No man for instance who does not have children of his own would be allowed to beat or punish children in a chief's court. This role is given to parents because they are considered to have *inimba* or *imfesane* (deep sympathy) for a child because of their own experience.

The final stage is *ubuxhego/inkonde/ingwevu/utatomkhulu* (an old man) and it begins around the ages of sixty or more. These are the men who offer words of wisdom and to some extent are also regarded as the living ancestors. They are called upon to solve mysteries in the community and give direction on how traditional ceremonies should be done. As people say, 'They have seen it all.' *Amaxhego* (plural) are exempt from physical work and only give instructions. They sit around the fire in the evening with their grandchildren and tell them *iintsomi* (folktales).

My discussion shows that manhood is not just a chronological event but it is socially and culturally produced over time. While the stages above suggest the status is immutable, I also argue that deeds can and do make a man of anyone who performs duties normally associated with manhood. Individual achievements and social status determine when one would be deemed ready to be promoted to the next stage of masculine identity and this shows the flexibility of these categories. Older men take charge in promoting young men and such decisions are discussed and agreed upon at a communal level. A father can 'promote' his son in his own homestead for instance if he marries but his promotion has no bearing on the larger community *per se*. A woman or

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<sup>79</sup> In isiZulu he is called *baba*.

even a boy could be regarded as a man purely because of their deeds within the household. A boy can graduate into manhood when his father dies and leaves the responsibility of taking care of his mother and his siblings to him, and should he fulfil this role he becomes a man not because he is not initiated but through his actions and how they are received in society. Similarly, *indoda* (a man) who has been through the five stages I described can and does become called *inja* (a dog) if regarded as useless within the household. In other words, the processes of making men are contingent and monitored; masculine identities are the product of on-going work and social evaluation.

Initiation's place in the making of men was a frequent topic of conversation among my respondents and more broadly in my research site. While initiation remains central to masculine identity-making, not all men are initiated and, particularly in urban areas, there are great debates over the place and value of this aspect of identity-formation, and the rural-urban contrasts that shape it. Ten of my male informants were born and raised in Cape Town, leaving only two men born in the countryside; Ta Pat (44) and Sizwe (35). As stated earlier, all the men in my study were initiated except Sizwe. I describe the implications of this by describing his life history in chapter five, exploring how he makes his identity, examining how his friends treat him knowing that he is 'a boy', and reflecting on the limitations this imposes and how he handles them. His narrative gives us an idea of what it means to be a child of a polygamous marriage but also how a man with no power (through employment and money and culturally sanctioned status) manages to maintain his masculine identity at least at the household level through the use of violence.

This chapter argued that, a Xhosa male body must go through much pain and be introduced to ancestors by spilling blood of an animal and circumcision to leave a mark for communal recognition. However, I have argued that the mark which becomes critical during *ukudodisa* (initiate's interrogation about his manhood journey) on its own is not sufficient. One can still be labelled as *inja* despite having the correct mark on his manhood if his behaviour and actions are deemed unmanly or boyish<sup>80</sup>. Similarly, Mehta

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<sup>80</sup> An interesting observation is that even though a new man runs to the river with boys and other men chasing him to wipe off his white ochre but once he comes home he should not run even if the rain is pouring down on him. I watched with keen interest a new man who had gone to fetch his newly found girlfriend from another village when the rain was pouring with lightening. His girlfriend run to a nearby house and found shelter between the houses but he continued to walk home. She later followed him. For a new man to be seen running he would be labelled as acting like a boy, meaning he did not leave behind his boyhood acts. As a man you are expected to walk slowly with dignity.



(2000:79) in his paper on Indian Muslim male circumcision, shows how Muslim male bodies are "...constituted through the ritual of circumcision, called *khatna*". His work also shows how pain from circumcision is central to the making of men and a shared sense of male community. "Each male must bear this pain and witness it in another" (Mehta, 2000:80). Likewise, I have shown in this chapter that, unlike the Western biological model of masculinity where effectively chronological age determines men's social positioning, in Nguni societies men are culturally produced. The production of a man in Nguni societies requires the ability to withstand excruciating continuous pain inflicted through *umdlanga*<sup>81</sup> (assegai) and *ukubopha* (the wrapping). One's ability to publically display *ukunyamezela* (to endure and overcome pain) not only is a sign of bravery, but also gives a man social status, respect, making him *indoda yonkwenene* ("a real man"). The identity of 'real man' is thus an acquired social status produced through pain and secrecy. In this society, any man who does not go through this culturally approved path is ostracised. He is called by insulting names and constantly reminded of his inferior social status.

The use of *ukwaluka* (circumcision) as a cultural practice and marker of male social status through the inscription of male bodies produces tensions among initiated men at different levels (Ngwane 2001; Mgqolozana 2009). It draws our attention to the generational conflicts between older and young more schooled men and between models of masculinity that differentiate between 'urban' and 'rural' modes of life.

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<sup>81</sup> *Umdlanga*<sup>81</sup> hold a different meaning to the Xhosa people than the everyday use of the term *ukusikwa* (to cut – usually by a knife). *Umdlanga* is usually kept with traditional herbs so that evil spirits could not affect it when it is time for usage.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The nature of relationships**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I describe in detail Sizwe's interesting but very complex life in order to explore some of the issues raised in chapter four, particularly questions of masculine identity formation, its meanings and performance in this community. As mentioned in Chapter One, Sizwe is born to a Xhosa mother and a Zulu father. Like many other men in this situation, he sees himself as a Zulu man. He is slowly losing contact with his mother's family from the Eastern Cape mainly to their cultural differences that I discuss below. As a 'boy' (according to his Xhosa friends because he is not circumcised), Sizwe navigates two worlds depending on the space at specific time. I describe his dilemmas below in depth in this chapter. The chapter shows how skilful he is in performing and managing his relationships with his friends. I explore different ways his identity changes. His narrative shows how external environment that surrounds him shapes his formulation and understanding of what it means for him to be a man. In describing his life I draw on Henderson's (2014) analysis of the performances of a young South African artist, Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity (2005), and Mfecane's (2011) account of masculinities of HIV positive men who, upon learning their status, joined a support group in Bushbuckridge, a South African rural village in the province of Mpumalanga. Mfecane (ibid) identifies "...independence, male dominance, control and freedom" as key features men use in constructing their masculinity among his informants. One of the key themes in Mfecane's narrative is how, in the absence of resources (money), violence becomes a weapon for men to silence the women around them as a way of maintaining and reinforcing patriarchal dominance. I am very much aware that these works reflect on different contexts to mine but their insistence on performance is critical to my work.

#### **Sizwe: a troubled childhood and family dynamics**

I have elected to firstly present in detail the life story of Sizwe Mchunu, with whom I worked the longest (2008-13) and who was central in introducing me to the

network that forms the core of my sample. Sizwe sees himself as a Zulu man because of patrilineal descent<sup>82</sup> despite being born to a Xhosa woman and a Zulu man. We will see below though that Sizwe positions himself to fit into the crowd or situation; if he is with Xhosas he becomes one of them and likewise when he is among his Zulu kinsmen he becomes 'a proper Zulu man'. But this is not without difficulties for him, especially among amaXhosa. His story and that of those around him helps reflect on masculine identity-construction, the use of violence, the meaning of having children, the complexity of polygamous marriages when different ethnicities are involved, construction of gender and performance of household tasks. His narrative therefore acts as a mirror through which other lives in the thesis emerge.

Sizwe was born in 1974 in Gugulethu at NY6,<sup>83</sup> two years before the famous 1976 Soweto student uprising in South Africa. His mother, Mams, came from the former Transkei to look for employment. She was working as a 'live-in' domestic worker in the white suburbs. In NY6, Sizwe's parents were living *etyotyombeni* (in a shack) as squatters. The area was damp and unpleasant. In 1978 his father staged a protest to *nontsumpa* (native official responsible for handing out newly built house to black people). According to Mams, her husband and other protesters told *nontsumpa* that they would not leave the office until they received keys for their houses, and that the police would have to remove them. Eventually, three of them were handed keys after they paid bribes for the houses. She does not remember how much the bribe was but says it was not much in those days. As shown by Lee's work (2005) in Gugulethu and Old Crossroads, occupying *nontsumpa*'s office was common and effective. The often-corrupt officials were known by the locals for accepting bribes before allocating houses to the Africans.

At that time Sizwe was four years old. He only spent three months at this new house before he was sent to Mhlangane village, his father's home in KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> AmaZulu, similar to amaXhosa, are a patrilineal group, which means children trace their ancestry through their father's lineage.

<sup>83</sup> The apartheid government did not give names to the streets in Gugulethu when it finally built houses for Africans in 1958. All streets were called Native Yards followed by the house number, hence NY. As outlined in chapter three, there has been strong pressure for this NY terminology to be dropped because of its derogatory nature and streets are now named after the community heroes and those who played an important role in the fight against apartheid.

<sup>84</sup> All their children were living in Mhlangane that time because of pass law harassment especially of women and children by the police. There was no free movement for Africans including young children. Many arrests were made as police exercised their power.

Sizwe travelled with Ningi, one of his elder sisters, by taxi. His parents had asked the driver to drop him in their village. Sizwe started schooling in his father's home village, Mhlangane, at the age of 8, in 1982. He was not well-treated by his father's other wives.

In 1985 when he was 11 and doing Standard 1 he returned to Gugulethu to continue his schooling. His mother was now aware of the ill-treatment he had received from his father's wives and wished her son would get a better schooling in the city. Despite having passed Standard 1, he did not go straight to Standard 2 in 1986, but was placed in Sub-B at Lwazi Junior School because teachers felt he needed to get a good foundation here. It was not unusual for children who came from the rural provinces to be downgraded because urban schools felt they were not on the same level with children in towns.

He passed Sub-B and Standard 1. Again in 1989 at the age 15 he failed Standard 3. Later he repeated Standard 6 too. He dropped out of school in 1993 after his third attempt to pass Standard 7 at the age of 19. Clearly there was a big difference between his age group and the grades he was repeating throughout his schooling days. While some of the men in my study do wish to go back to school or take courses, Sizwe has no desire at all.

While in Cape Town, Sizwe lived with his mother, father and five siblings. Sizwe's father did a lot of renovations in his house, including walling the yard. Their house is on a street corner, and the yard is bigger than others. The main house has three bedrooms, Mams, Gogo and Ningi's. There is a kitchen leading to Sizwe's flat, a bathroom with toilet and a big sitting room with a table and four chairs. There is also a wall unit and a long couch in the sitting room. The house and yard buildings were home to 17 people at the time of my research. The toilet inside the main house is kept relatively clean and the council toilet outside is always filthy and blocked because people use newspapers instead of toilet paper. It is always leaking but Sizwe as a man does not fix it. The wasted water has often led to the family not having water at all because they are in arrears with municipal water bills.<sup>85</sup> Mams and her daughters often describe Sizwe as *inja* (a dog) for allowing things to collapse in his presence.

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<sup>85</sup> The last bill I saw was around R32 000 when their water was cut off by the municipality for three months in 2012. They were asked to pay a minimum of R500 to have water released again and they could not pay that amount for three months and in that period they had to depend on neighbours and rain to get water.

Sizwe is the last born of his parents' six children. Two of his four sisters, Heki and Beauty married. Ningi and Gogo never married. His last born brother, Mfana, died at the age of 4. Mams says Mfana was always in and out of hospitals due breathing difficulties. Heki lives with her husband in Kraaifontein and they have two children, a boy (16) and a girl (14). I never met their children and they never visited Sizwe's family between 2008 and 2013. I met Heki's husband first at a stadium in a soccer match and later when Sizwe's father passed away in September 2009. Gogo has one daughter, Asanda (22). She and Asanda's father are no longer together. Gogo does not know whether he is still alive or not and Asanda, I am told, has no interest in finding out what happened to her father either. Asanda lives with her seven year old son, Thandile, on the other side of what used to be Sizwe's father's garage.

Ningi has two daughters, Mantombise (18) and Ntabiseng (9) born of different fathers. Both her daughters live in the main house and sleep in Ningi's room. Gogo occupies another bedroom alone and sometimes sleeps with Asanda's son, Thandile. The final bedroom is Mams's.

Mantombise fell pregnant early in 2012 and subsequently dropped out of school in Grade 11. She never went back to school after giving birth; instead she found a job in town at a restaurant. Her boyfriend lives nearby and since she gave birth she spend most of her time at her boyfriend's place with the baby. To date, there is no suggestion of marriage. When she started working in October 2013, she left her baby with her mother, Ningi. I later learnt that Ningi, who is HIV-positive, was breastfeeding the baby. This started after the baby showed signs of illness and would not eat but kept crying. Frustrated, Ningi gave her breast and eventually began to lactate. She then told Mantombise, who accepted it, apparently without question.<sup>86</sup> By January 2014, Ningi was still breastfeeding the baby, and continued to look after<sup>87</sup> her when Mantombise was at work.<sup>88</sup>

Although Mantombise's boyfriend did not pay 'compensation' (or 'damages' as it is commonly known) for the pregnancy, he does contribute to the child's up-keep. The

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<sup>86</sup> That left me wondering if Mantombisi is not also infected but has not told Ningi. Social stigma, strong ideas about the proper relations between mothers and daughters, and layers of silence and anxiety in the family made it difficult to broach the subject.

<sup>87</sup> Sometimes this 'care' takes place in shebeens Ningi frequents.

<sup>88</sup> The transition from being a schoolgirl into becoming a mother means she is now considered an adult and therefore she has to provide for her daughter. As it is understood locally, her motherhood status means school is no longer for her; bearing a child has made her an adult.

household environment and lack of parental guidance meant Mantombise only told her mother and grandmother about the father of the child but no traditional formalities were undertaken. She was never taken to her boyfriend's family for him to formally accept responsibility. It is therefore not surprising that he has not paid a cent towards impregnating her out of wedlock. The implication is that the two families do not know each other. Should Mantombise's relationship come to an end, she will have no family support. The child's father will perform his own rituals for the child if he wishes.

Sizwe's sister, Beauty, has one child, a boy Sammy (14). Beauty and her husband, Sammy's father, got divorced in 2007. Of him she says,

*My husband lost his job and I felt he was not doing enough to get another job Andile. **I became the man in that house** that is why I decided to leave him. **Andile I cannot be a man when you are here**, we must work together. I sold his furniture and organised a truck to fetch it when he was away before I left him... he is stupid man and I could see he had a girlfriend so I wanted to teach him a lesson. He stays with his girlfriend now and they have a beautiful house I must say but he does not want Sammy in his house... he says we spoilt him. He knows I am [HIV] positive now because I talk [about it] when I am drunk you know me now (Interview, 29 February 2012, emphasis added).*

In this excerpt, Beauty describes how, because her husband was unemployed, she took on the role of 'the man of the house'. She never confronted him about the girlfriend<sup>89</sup> but evicted him when he failed to support the family. In Beauty's world, once he became unable to provide for his family, he did not hold the value of 'a man of the house' and ceased to command the same respect he had while still working. For her, he was no longer a man in the socially accepted meaning of the word.

Beauty's current boyfriend, Lion, lives with her and Sammy in her bungalow behind Sizwe's flat. They had been together for two years by the end of my field work. Lion, a man in his late forties, has a diploma in religious studies from Butterworth Collage in the Eastern Cape. He is not working. Like Beauty, he is HIV-positive and they both receive government grants every month for their health condition. They call each other *umntu nam* ("my person", a term that shows a great deal of respect towards one's partner. It gives a sense of bragging about one's partner and sends a clear message that this person is mine or 'taken'. It has a similar undertone as *isithandwa sam* - my lover). This framing is important because a man who lives at a girlfriend's place loses his respect and power as a man in the house. In the event of misbehaving like when he is drunk or

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<sup>89</sup> This raises an important question about women's demands for equal rights with men. Why did it become a problem for her to play the provider role in their house and not support her husband in this difficult period?

fights with his lover, he is always reminded who owns the house. In Nguni societies, a man's status is deeply connected to him being a provider. This includes money, house ownership and a kraal, as well as being a protector. Lion's government grant which he contributes to the household does not have the same social value as money from a job, especially because it is 'for HIV'. It is not unheard of here to hear people insulting each other with reference to this money, calling it *ngcisa ngemali yeAids* (you are being stingy with this AIDS money). His masculinity is negatively affected by this compromising situation. His clothes have been thrown to the street several times by Beauty just like those of Minazana by Sizwe. The fact that he lives in a woman's house instead of providing one for her, is read as an indicator of failure in his duties as man who should be the one providing for his woman and family. It used to be considered shameful for a man to be in Lions' situation, especially in rural areas.<sup>90</sup>

Like Mantombise, Sammy also dropped out of school in March 2012 at the age of 13. That April he was arrested for stabbing another boy at a soccer field. He is a heavy drug-user and becomes violent and disrespectful in his need. During his court hearing, Beauty was asked by the magistrate how Sammy is behaving at home and whether he was still attending school. Instead of telling the truth, she protected him, saying "*Sammy is a well behaving boy and the incident of beating and stabbing another child was just a mistake*" (Field notes, 10 May 2012). She refused the magistrate's offer of state assistance (such as a rehabilitation school).<sup>91</sup> Prior to his arrest, Sammy had sold two of Beauty's television sets and another one belonging to Lion. It became clear to me that in addition to wanting to reduce Sammy's sentence, she wanted to avoid an abusive reaction as Sammy might have felt that revelations about his behaviour at home would have been like giving him away to enemies; *umthengisile* ('you sold someone'). It is true that some parents would do anything to protect their children, as an act of love and care. But what we see here is a clear indication that she fears Sammy. She knew that incarceration would be temporary and feared his response. Her fears should be understood in a broader context where male domination over women is often reinforced through violence. Where men have no

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<sup>90</sup> In rural areas, men take pride in waking up in the morning and going to the kraal to urinate and check animals. Kraals are regarded as sacred places and remain well respected because it is believed that is where ancestors live. As *umnumzana* at his own homestead it is viewed as acceptable for him to urinate there. A man recognised as such – 'who is old enough to have his own homestead' – would find it difficult to do that at another man's kraal.

<sup>91</sup> I found this puzzling because not so long ago before this incident she had asked me about social workers and soon after the court case she wanted to be connected with social workers again for her son's behaviour.

power in terms of controlling women through resources, they often resort to violence and that perpetuates patriarchal domination.

Hunter (2006:99) describes the phrase '*anginawo amandla*' ('I don't have power') as an expression Zulu men use when they are unable to meet their responsibilities as men. He argues that men's power in certain spheres, including their ability to abandon pregnant women, is linked to men's disempowerment in other spheres, notably economic participation (Hunter, 2006:106). Violence is one of the few choices men often take when their manhood or social status is in question. Sammy was used to seeing his uncle, Sizwe, exerting his position 'as a man' by beating Minazana until his debilitating health sapped his strength. So Beauty is careful and very affectionate at the same time as a parent. There is a complex web of relations that she must guard (and guard against). She had no way of knowing how other family members would react if she was the one responsible for sending her son to prison. At the same time Beauty knows the violence new prisoners face in jail as a repeat offender herself, so her emotions overwhelmed her to protect her son.

Prior to Sammy's court case he was beaten in Barcelona, an informal settlement nearby Gugulethu, by its residents and nearly died. Beauty arrived when the community members were planning to burn him alive<sup>92</sup>. According to Mams,

*Sammy with his friends was accused of stealing a DVD player and a television set. The incident happened late afternoon when people were coming back from work. Sammy went to one of the houses to ask for water to drink. Immediately the people there were suspicious of him. They chased him away but he insisted that he was thirsty. One person left the house to report to the neighbours. In the meantime two other boys were stealing a DVD, Hi-fi and a TV next door. People started calling each other and the two other boys run away leaving those items. Community members decided that Sammy went to that house to distract them so that his friends could do the job next door. When people asked him what he was doing there he said he had come to watch a DVD to his friend's house. They didn't believe him and the beating started. Beauty was told by those who live close to Barcelona and she ran there quickly (Field notes, 26 May 2012).*

Sammy is very lucky to have escaped alive from the street justice as others committing similar acts were killed. Such reaction from the community is a sign that they have lost faith in the police. When Beauty arrived Sammy was only left with his underwear, his whole body was bleeding with *stjambok* beatings. He was then taken to Jooste hospital where he spent more than a week.

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<sup>92</sup> An interesting change after this near death experience, Sammy joined the Muslim religion for about 2 to 3 months. But strangely he did not stop smoking and was often laughed at by family members for being manipulative. It became clear that he was going there for food.



Sammy now seems a typical *ncanyehweni* (one whom others have given up on). Even his own father has given up on him, refusing to allow him to visit and accusing Beauty's family of spoiling him. This leaves more questions. What kind of a man would easily give away his son? Is he a 'typical man' who does not like responsibility, as women claim? As a man should he not be the one disciplining his son?

Lion and Sizwe tried to initially encourage Sammy to go back to school, later even beating him, but they failed. The beating made Sammy even more rebellious and 'cheeky'. AmaXhosa say *umthi ugotywa usemtsha* (a tree must be bent in its infancy stage), meaning a child must be disciplined (usually interpreted as through beating) early in his life otherwise he will become unruly. It was even more difficult for Lion. As he put it,

*Hey Ta Ager [my nickname] this laaity [Afrikaans term for a boy] told me in my face that I am not his father; I must shut up. Hey I could not believe that a small laaity would say that to me. His mother had to intervene. Remember I am the one who washes and iron this boy's clothes. I have been assisting him with his homework (Field notes, 7 April 2012).*

Here is a man caring for a boy but he does not get the respect (*intonipho*) he expects from him, both as an adult man and as someone who plays the fathering role.<sup>93</sup> Lion has already put his masculinity in question by living in his girlfriend's house, washing and ironing this child's clothes. For him to be seen by other men performing such functions – and especially for a child of another man – could easily lead to name calling as *umfazazi* (a woman) or *bamqgibile*<sup>94</sup> (someone who does not question instructions. The implication is that Beauty is in complete control of his life). Some of his acquaintances were very critical of him but none of them would tell him directly. I often observed them shaking their heads in disapproval of his actions. One man went as far as saying hey *impundu zinzima madoda funeka sizicenge* ("a woman's ass is hard to find guys, we must worship the ones we have") (Field notes, 09 August 2012). The comments made by these men reveal gender role differences in the community. But interestingly none of them ever directed those comments to Lion, at least not in my presence. This could be out of respect for his

<sup>93</sup> Throughout my field work in Gugulethu I did not encounter the old Xhosa axiom that says *umntana wam ngowakho, owakho ngowam* (my child is your child, and your child is mine). The disappearance of these communal values means neighbours and uncles cannot discipline or even shout children that are not theirs. Parents are blamed because they protect their children and would rather fight with the neighbour instead of applauding such assistance. But also elders fear retribution from such children. Incidents of families being set alight in their houses at night for being cited as talking too much are familiar in this community.

<sup>94</sup> This is a phrase used to refer to a man who is believed to have been bewitched or given love herbs so that he does not say no. He can even wash this woman's underwear without seeing anything wrong in that – most African men despise such action from a man. It is considered a sign of a weak man.

situation or not wanting to spoil their friendship. Thus even when men step outside socially sanctioned roles, other men take care not to humiliate them further.

The men who would normally play a fathering role in Sammy's life in the absence of his own father, Lion and his uncle Sizwe, have no power to do so. Sammy appears to have completely lost respect for any elder in the house including his own grandmother, Mams. He told both Sizwe and Lion that they are not his father and therefore they cannot tell him what to do. In Xhosa we say *akababhalelanga leta/ncwadi ubaxecele ezinkonqeni*<sup>95</sup> ("he did not write a letter or send a messenger to them but he told them in their face or directly"; a sign of great disrespect). This shows that men who perform fathering roles to children risk having their dignity undermined by such unruly children like Sammy. Even being a social father to one's sister's child, despite the cultural sanction of this role (see for example Radcliffe Brown, 1952), is complex because the mother might not approve of your fathering practices which immediately tells the child that 'here is someone siding with me and what I stand for'. Sizwe might have been trying to be there in Sammy's life but Sammy seems not to care about the guidance Sizwe has to offer.

Unlike Sammy, who rejected his maternal uncle's care, Sizwe had had a close relationship with his mother's brother when he was young. In NY6, Sizwe also stayed with his uncle, his mother's brother. He says he had a closer relationship with his uncle than with any other member of his father's family. The uncle stayed with them even when they moved to NY140 (their current street). The uncle was working but got fired at work due to alcohol abuse at work. Loss of income, it would seem, led to Sizwe's father asking him to leave the house in 1989 when Sizwe was 16. The uncle moved to Philippi (a nearby neighbourhood) but soon got ill and was sent back to the Eastern Cape where he died in 1995. Sizwe did not have money to attend his uncle's funeral and he does not see the possibility of ever going to his grave for *ukubeka ilitye* (to place a stone on his grave – a sign of respect and closure).<sup>96</sup> In other words, he is unable (and perhaps unwilling) to perform socially sanctioned roles.

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<sup>95</sup> For a child to utter back to elders is called in Xhosa *utsibe ilitye likaphungela* (he has jumped a phungela stone – highest level of disrespecting elders).

<sup>96</sup> The failure to do *ukubeka ilitye* to one's relative is believed to cause a lot of misfortunes in one's life. Usually one is expected to also slaughter a sheep *yokuzihlamba* (to cleanse any bad luck that might be hanging over one's head) during this process.

I have shown the broad range of relationships existent in the house and yard in which Sizwe resided at the time of my research. We have seen the ways that masculinity is made and unmade in everyday practices of love and nurture. I return now to a focus on Sizwe, tracing his relationship with his own father, mother, and broader family.

### **Polygamous fathering: implications for Sizwe and his family**

We have already seen several breaks in the place, people and continuity of care in Sizwe's life. At the age of 23, in 1996, he moved to his sister, Heki, who was staying with her husband in Pietermaritzburg. He stayed with them for two and half years. He only saw his other family members in December. In 2003, Heki and her husband moved to Kraaifontein, Cape Town, where they bought a house and purportedly survive by selling drugs. Sizwe says *they are living a good life because they have lots of money from selling drugs* (Field notes, 1 March 2011). He describes his sister as someone who had been very close to him throughout both emotionally and financially.

Sizwe's father's family had long been polygamous. Sizwe's *babomkhulu* (grandfather), his father's father, had six wives who bore twenty-four acknowledged children. He died before Sizwe was born. His grandfather used to work in the mines. In fact, no-one knows how many children the grandfather had in total because he had other children 'on the mines'. Such is a way of life for many migrant workers, as we have seen in chapter one with my own father, fathering children at the work place, if you like. Mams never spoke of conflicts between among themselves as wives of one man.

Talking about the importance of having as many wives as one can manage, Hunter (2004:125-6) state that

... At the helm of *umuzi* was *umnumzana* (male household head) and great social weight was attached to an *umnumzana*'s ability to accumulate cattle, marry several wives... A masculinity that celebrated polygamy, cattle, and childbirth thus underpinned a man's economic success: the more successful a man was the more wives he could take and the quicker the *umuzi*, and his *umnumzana* status, could grow

Sizwe's father was among the wealthy men in his community and he could afford three wives. To avoid conflicts, each wife is usually built her own hut, allocated her fields to cultivate and provide food for her own family. Each wife is also allocated her own cattle for milking and oxen for ploughing her fields. It must be noted though that the allocation of her "own cattle" does not mean she owned them. The cattle still belonged

to *umnumzane* and so a woman could not sell them for instance. The cattle allocated to a wife would be inherited by her son in the event *umnumzane* dies (Bryant, 1929:29). Mams however was never allocated any cattle or built her own hut in Mhlangane village by her husband. Considering that she is the only Xhosa wife, he may have imagined that she might never want to spend the rest of her life in KwaZulu-Natal. But also there is a strong possibility that she was married only as a “town wife”<sup>97</sup> and he had no intentions to bring her back to Kwa-Zulu. This is confirmed by the fact that when he returned to Natal they never discussed the possibility of her going with him. She visited his village on several occasions and she was accepted even by his other wives. In exploring the family dynamics around this issue, I asked her how the sleeping arrangement was negotiated and she said, *no it was never a problem, remember I stayed with him here most of the year so when we are there I used to sleep with all the children in their grandmother’s hut or with one of his wives* (Interview, 15 Dec 2013). There was no intimacy between her and her husband in Mhlangane and she was fine with it.

In polygamous marriages, a Zulu man has his own *ilawu likababa* (private hut) which he uses to be intimate with his wives. Each wife has to be alternatively invited weekly or fortnightly, depending on his wishes, time available, and the number of wives. It became clear in our conversations that Mams either never really thought about the implications of her not having her own hut there or she must have decided from the moment she entered the marriage that she will never stay long in Natal. Nyembezi and Nxumalo (1966:39) give us an idea of the arrangement of huts in the Zulu homestead:

*Between the upper section of the cattle bool and the outer fence is the main hut belonging to the first wife, the one who bears an heir. On the left hand is the hut belonging to the third wife (ingqadi) and the houses of minor wives regarded as assistants to the second wife. On the right hand is the hut belonging to the second wife (ikhobhwa).*

Clearly, as Mams was *ingqadi* (the third wife), her children, particularly Sizwe as a boy child, would not have benefited from his father’s inheritance other than the cattle his mother might have been given by her husband if she was staying there. Because she never stayed there she says she was never allocated cattle for milking for her children. It made much sense for her therefore to remain in Gugulethu where her children would have access to a house which they would not have gotten in Mhlangane. But for children

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<sup>97</sup> Often migrant workers have wives who maintain their homesteads in the countryside and raise children but they also have what is known in the literature as “town wife”. This wife cares for him emotionally and sexually in town and might never want to go back to the village with him when he retires.

being separated from their father has devastating effects. Sizwe described himself as 'living like an orphan' when his father left Cape Town to spend his last days with his other children

Among the Zulu people, the wealth of a man is gauged by the number of cattle he has. Sizwe's father is reported to have been wealthy. He was buried, as both *umnumzane* (the head of the homestead) of his homestead and a wealthy man, at the centre of his kraal. Zulu people are particularly attached to land while still alive through cultivating it and assign huge importance to cattle in the spiritual life. Elliot (1991:7) remarks that:

*...a person carries into the next world the influence that he had during the lifetime. The spirit of the Zulu King will watch over the whole nation, while the ancestral spirits of a family will care for that family, as well as their cattle, goats and crops. The ancestral spirits "like to be remembered", and cattle offerings will be made to them to show they have never been forgotten.*

After he passed on, a number of rituals are reported to have been performed for him in his homestead by his other children, but the Gugulethu family never attended. Sizwe mentioned two rituals, *ukukhapha* ('the sending off') and the *ukumbuyisa* ('bringing back'), both of which are critical to cement relationships with the dead. He explained that when *intloko yekhaya* (head of the homestead) dies, a cow is slaughtered for the funeral or soon after his burial and later another cow is slaughtered to bring his soul back home. As the head of the homestead, Sizwe says it was important to perform these rituals so that his father can look after his family wherever he is. The Gugulethu family complained about lack of money to travel and claimed that they would have loved to have been there. Sizwe remembers that while living in Gugulethu, his father would always pour some of his drink (alcohol) on the ground for the ancestors before he and his friends would start to drink. But Sizwe does not do this when they drink with his friends. He says that is because usually the alcohol is not his so he cannot ask his friends to perform family rituals on his behalf. Mams says,

*The cattle kraal, yindawu ehloniphekileyo (a respected place), is a place where his father as intloko yomuzi (family head) used to communicate with his ancestral spirits during family sacrificial ceremonies and where he used to pray on behalf of the whole family to request the ancestors to guard the welfare of his family members. Ubuhlanti<sup>98</sup> benkomo (the cattle kraal) and indlunkulu (the main hut) served as the sacred places of the homestead; you wouldn't just go there especially if he is not there (Interview, 15 Dec 2013).*

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<sup>98</sup> When talking to Mams and Sizwe it is easy to notice how they mix isiXhosa and isiZulu in conversations, unlike others in the family. Often I felt they might be trying to accommodate me and when I speak isiZulu in response they go back to isiXhosa.

Her husband returned to Natal in 1992 when Sizwe was 19, citing the need to be closer to his wives, children and cattle as a retired man. Mams says: *we never really talked about it honestly; he just told me that he wanted to be closer to his home; he was tired of urban life... I could not have gone with him Andile because we have this house here. Who would have been left here? We have children so we could not sell this house and besides I didn't want to go there (Interview, 27 Feb 2013).* She added, *If I were to go with him, remember I do not have my own but there so when everyone is there permanently where would I live with my children?* There is no evidence that her husband also wanted her to go to Natal and it might be safe to assume that he saw her as a “town wife” only. When her husband left Cape Town, Mams says she inherited the house in Gugulethu.<sup>99</sup> After he left, their marriage seem to have reached its destination. He never sent her any remittances as he did with his other wives while he was in Cape Town. In our conversation Mams said about the void the departure of her husband might have caused in her life,

*I raised my children Andile because even when he was here he used to send his money to his other wives saying that they are not working like me. The only positive thing he did here was to extend this house under apartheid, fighting with the police because they would come and ask where did you get permission to extend a house that does not belong to you and all sorts of questions. Most of the construction took place at night here. So it is difficult to be in a polygamous marriage that is how I started selling drugs and having clients even from Water Front because they were saying my dagga is good (Interview, 27 Feb 2013).*

Clearly, she was ‘the man of the house’ even when her husband was still here. She worked as a domestic worker and also sold drugs to support her children. Her suggestion that she was a man of the house, *I raised my children*, is a theme that my informants often felt strongly about. In fact, when Sizwe talks about Mhlangane village he calls it *ekhaya* (my home) and the Gugulethu house he refers to it as *idladla lam* (my home – township lingo). According to Ross (2010:74-5) the following terms, *umzi*, *indlu* and *ikhaya*, carry different social and emotional resonance:

Umzi is usually translated into English as ‘homestead’. It is always used to describe rural modes and patterns of living, constellations of agnatic kin. The *umzi* is the place of communal living – a cluster of buildings that house kin... *Indlu* means house. The term refers both to the physical structure and to the ranking of polygamous relations in an *umzi*. The word most commonly used in everyday translation for the English term ‘home’ is *ikhaya* but there are important differences between the use of ‘home’ by English-speaking South Africans and the Xhosa term... a child refers to the homestead

<sup>99</sup> But interestingly, it is only in Mams’ mind that she owns their house in Gugulethu. She does not have a title deed for it and the house is still registered in her husband’s name. They have no formal marriage certificate either which means any of his wives can claim ownership to his house in Gugulethu. Of course she might have an advantage because she has always lived in that house. Furthermore, their marriage was traditionally recognised.

as *ikhaya lethu* (our home), while the head of the household refers to the same homestead as *umzi wam*.

Sizwe says '*idladla lam*' lacks permanence for him. It is a home for now but, like his father, he is hoping that should something happen to him, his family would send his remains back to Mhlangane village. As he put it, '*idladla Ta Ager and soon it will be my house and it's a house I will leave my son with but ikhaya lam (my home) is in Natal that is where I belong*' (Field notes, 1 March 2011). He never talks the same way about his maternal village in the Eastern Cape. In fact, he does not see himself visiting there now and it is clear that the fact that he has not been initiated, despite being 35 years old, is an important hindrance for him. Unlike the amaXhosa he socialises with in Gugulethu, in the Eastern Cape he had an unpleasant welcome despite them knowing that his father is Zulu. When it comes to male hierarchy amaXhosa do not compromise about their distinction between manhood and boyhood, as I have shown in chapter four. A 'boy' is made to feel that he cannot mix with initiated men especially in formal gatherings like *amasiko/imicimbi* (traditional ceremonies).

Mams says Sizwe's *inkaba* (umbilical cord) was buried in Cape Town, NY6, meaning for him that part of his roots has already been eroded. *Inkaba*<sup>100</sup> forms such an important part of one's roots in black communities. The fact that it is part of one's flesh that is well cared for and buried 'at home' connects one to the dead and the homestead. Sizwe can never trace where his parents' shack was because there are houses there now. Sizwe is very clear about his final resting place. He wants to be buried next to his father – not necessarily next to his grave because his father's grave is inside the kraal as the owner of his homestead – but in Mhlangane. This is unlikely to happen; he has no burial society membership, and neither does his family. With the lack of resources it seems very unlikely that his Cape Town family can afford to transport his body to Mhlangane and with little communication with the members there it is unlikely that they will take such responsibility.

Both Sizwe and his father had to constantly manage changing perceptions about their masculine status, not only from outsiders but also within their family. Depending on the mood and situation, Mams often refers to Sizwe as a 'dog' due to his failures to 'man up' within the household. Such a label might have been used to describe her

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<sup>100</sup> I discuss the significance of *inkaba* in the next chapters in more detail because it is an integral part of one's identity and failure to know it can lead to humiliation and name calling.

husband; as we've seen, she felt she performed the role of a man even in his presence. Similarly, these men also endured the social demeaning status of being seen as 'boys' by their Xhosa friends due to their lack of initiation. Depending on the mood, space and time, Sizwe often has to navigate his way through contexts where his lack of initiation is a hindrance. Possible his own father had to endure the same treatment while in Gugulethu in a Xhosa dominated community. It is not surprising therefore that his father made a conscious decision to return to his birth place, Mhlangane in KZN, because humiliation in traditional ceremonies was only going to get worse for an old man who is still a 'boy'. Interestingly, Sizwe's father was a well-respected man in the sense of having strong polygamous rural household, but did not take on appropriate disciplining roles in Mams' family, again confirming Mams' assertion that she needed to be a man despite having a present household head. Their status therefore constantly fluctuate between a 'boy' and a 'man' depending on the mood and situation. It seems, because Mams is a Xhosa woman, she based her judgement and expectation on how a real man should be on her understanding of the five ideal stages described in chapter four. Hence when they fail to match her expectation, she calls them 'dogs'.

Sizwe's life history is unique but is also one of many untold life accounts of children from polygamous marriages that span rural and urban areas. Such children face the possibility of parting ways with their fathers any moment. As a migrant labourer, both Mams and her children must have expected that Sizwe's father at some stage would return to his rural homestead. A wealthy man there, he was never going to settle in Cape Town. But Sizwe does not seem to have anticipated that move. Sizwe is one of the fortunate African children who had an opportunity to spend part of his childhood life with or in the presence of his father. Under apartheid African fathers had to choose between remaining in the villages with their families, running the risk of starving their families or migrate for employment so as to contribute in the upkeep of their families. Most men chose the latter hence were deprived of opportunity to see their children grow up. The result of this, as Reynolds points out, was that "for many people there is a dramatic disjuncture between the ideals and the experiences of family life" (2000:141). When migrants, like Sizwe's father, return to rural homesteads leaving town families, youngsters like Sizwe are left with the responsibility to be a man and take care of others; that is, to take on adult male roles even when not yet of an age or status to do so.



In our conversations, Mams expressed feelings of having to be a man of the house because her husband was sending his money back home to his other wives. This was a well calculated move by him, in making sure that when time comes for him to go back, he received a warm welcome because he has maintained contact and provided for them even though he had not been there for long periods. Writing on amaXhosa migrants, Ngwane (2001:404-5) argues that

...the ability of household heads to maintain their control over this complexly articulated structure of social reproduction depended both its semantic stability and the concealment of its inherent contradictions, a control that rested precariously on the vicissitudes of the migrant labor market. Through the proceeds of their employment, household heads monopolized control over the labor of women and children to reproduce domestic economies based on cattle and small-scale farming. Further, by sponsoring the schooling of their children, and the initiation ceremonies for their sons in particular, these older men were investing in the future of these domestic economies over which they hoped to retain control even past their working years.

Usually on return to the countryside, migrant workers, as we have seen with Sizwe's father, leave a huge economic, social and emotional void for members left in town. Often the town wife and children are not known by those in the countryside or even prepared to face the rural wife who had to carry the burden of maintaining the homestead with limited resources. While Mams had visited and been welcomed at Sizwe's father's rural homestead, nevertheless, her acceptance – and Sizwe's – seems to have been conditional.

### ***He is my father but it's the same as not having a father....***

These are the words often uttered by Sizwe whenever I asked how he felt about his father leaving them. Although there was an understanding and anticipation from Sizwe and perhaps the whole family that their father should also spend some time with his other children but there was always a sense of disappointment. Once he said, *he is my father but it's the same as not having a father if I cannot claim (bold) on to him when I want like other children* (Interview, 2 April 2009). Sizwe's feelings and attachment to his father as one of his many children were put on hold unexpectedly when his father left. He seems to accept that his father had to spend time with his other children as well:

*They are also his children... I had to accept it and that is why I also don't think having many wives is right. You see now we are like orphans yet our father is alive... Of course I also wanted him to stay because he is my father. When he was here I didn't feel any sense of responsibility but after he left we had*

*to take the business of selling stuff very serious because that is how we survived since he left us (Field notes, 1 March 2011).*

In our conversations it became clear that he does not support polygamy, feeling that it robbed him of the precious time he could have spent with his father. But he never imagined that they would never spend time together after his father left Cape Town in 1992. He says he needed to grow and be more responsible as a man. Even when his mother had a stroke in 2007 which left her right arm dysfunctional, his father never came back to check the condition of his third wife. Mams' marriage seems to be only a thing of the past. This left Sizwe with more curiosity,

*I do wonder if his love for his wife (Mams) and for us disappeared. I do ask myself if he really loved us. I mean Ta Ager since iTayma (my father) left he never came back and there has been very little contact between us. Abantakwethu (my brothers) are well established there, they have their own houses and are driving nice cars; he often goes to them and spends time with them. He can ask for money from them [to send to us] (Interview, 2 April 2009).*

Even though he did not make much financial contribution in terms of supporting Mams to raise their children, one gets a sense of betrayal and abandonment when talking to Mams and her children. They feel that once they were out of his sight, Sizwe's father forgot about them, abandoning them. Sizwe never made any attempt to engage his father about his failure to visit them since he left. In fact, he did not even have his father's cell phone number. He did get messages when his father called his mother. The quality of life he enjoyed when his father was around changed dramatically when he left them. He remembers those wonderful moments between a father and a son: *as a child you feel safe, loved and you know that your father will bring you something when he comes back from work, maybe a toy. I had a special place in his heart because after my brother died I was the only boy here. His other sons never visited us, or maybe they did once but they didn't like it here. He used to put me on his lap when he is eating and would share his food with me; it was nice (Interview, 18 May 2011).* As the only boy from Mams he received special treatment from his father. He has not been able to form any strong relationship with any of his *abantakwabo* (brothers) from his father's other wives and believes it is because they live far apart from each other. Once, when he was expressing how he missed his father I asked him if his father ever discussed with him any possibility of moving back together. His response was, *What you are asking me was not easy to do. Remember my father has eight other sons... amadoda amadala le kum (older men than me) and these are the ones who benefited from his property. I knew when he told us that he was going back to Natal that ok now he is choosing to live with them. It would have been pointless for me Ta Ager to follow him. Instead I must look after his house here you see. At least unlike other men he left us with something important, a house (Interview, 5 February 2009).* The fact that he did not benefit from

his father's heritage also angers him, *the fact that we are all his children means we should all get something from his heritage. It is not fair that those guys shared everything amongst themselves. All we got here is this house* (Interview, 5 February 2009). In discussions, Sizwe shifted between nostalgia, anger and resigned acceptance.

As the last born of his parents however, he says he received much love from all his sisters, *"They all loved me and they were very protective of me from other boys. I used to receive gifts from their boyfriends"* (Interview, 5 February 2009). But the manner in which he treats them now is completely different. He fights with his sisters, using very dangerous weapons like hammers and knives. Sizwe is considered 'useless' by family members and for him to sort of regain some form of status as a man, he frequently resorts to violence.

As explained in chapter four, *ubudoda zizenzo* (being a man is one's deeds). When Sizwe's father left Cape Town, Sizwe became the man of the house with a responsibility to take care of his mother, the family and the house. He says *"As a man I had to stand by my mother, give her all the support she needed to keep the family going."* It was around this time in 1992 that Mams started asking him to sell dagga (marijuana) at school. But such a task would not have been possible without the support from his friends to ensure that the money he made was not taken away by other boys. So he had a strong team on his side going to school armed with knives in their bags. He recounts how it all started;

*Yha i-oledi lalidayisa izinto zamajita aphenlini (yes my mother was selling stuff for guys here) and she asked me to carry some so that I could sell at school, I mean other boys were also selling so why not! She was hesitant first that older guys might take my stuff but hayi jonga kudala ndinamajita nam ungadlali Ta Ager (hey look I always had my guys Ta Ager don't play with me) nothing happened. I started having more and more clients. I sold for about half a year until we had police raids happening quite often so I stopped and at that time I was doing standard five but we were old boys at school* (Interview, 5 February 2009).

It was around the same time that he also started using these drugs himself with his friends. His school work suffered. They started forming groups and making plans to get money to buy dagga and soon Mandrax (methaqualone) as well. They would help people with small house duties like cutting grass or cleaning the yard. None of the money they received ever reached their parents or made any contribution at home.

Assuming responsibility for a family requires regular income. Sizwe has never had a long term job in his life. He only works in 'piece jobs' for a week or at most a month. Since I have known him he has never made any active attempt to find employment. In 2010 a man who owns a van and lives in Sizwe's area was given a job of delivering newspapers (City Vision and Vukani) weekly. He gave Sizwe a delivery job but Sizwe

only worked for two weeks. He complained about having to wake up early and come home late. He left home after 06:00am and would come home around 18:00 twice a week, earning R80 per day. He felt that the money was too little.<sup>101</sup> He now depends on his mother to support him, including for food, clothes and other needs. This puts his masculine identity in question, even as it reinforces the perception that his mother is ‘the man of the house’.

### **Sizwe’s love life, lies, violence and family dynamics**

Sizwe, a man known by his friends as *isishumane* (someone scared to approach girls), met Minazana by luck. Minazana, a 24 year old girl and mother of a 7 year old daughter, was running away from *otsotsi* (thugs) when she met another young woman who happens to know Sizwe. She took Minazana to Sizwe’s place where she was going to smoke drugs. Minazana says about their meeting:

*It was getting late. It must have been past 8pm when we came here. Amajita (guys) were here smoking and we joined them and that is when I started smoking serious stuff i.e. pill. I used to smoke pills before but not regularly. This girl left us here after 11pm and soon after that everyone left. I told Sizwe I had no place to sleep because I am from Khayelitsha and he offered me a place to sleep. We were both high on tik and dagga and he proposed love before we started having sex and that is how we started.*

She then went to Khayelitsha initially “to fetch a few clothes” and then “kept going back to fetch more of my clothes ever since I stayed with him”.

Sizwe and Minazana call each other my boyfriend or girlfriend, unlike Beauty and Lion, who call each other *umntu wam*, a more respectful term that indicates a deeper relationship. While both couples *behlalisana* (are cohabiting), this is not an approved form of living between a man and a woman, despite being common practice now. The relationship between Sizwe and Minazana is mutually abusive. Initially, Sizwe beat Minazana. In about 2012 the tables turned; Sizwe’s health is poor and Minazana is now physically stronger. People describe Sizwe as lazy and as living for drugs. Minazana’s decision to continue living with an abusive boyfriend should be understood with reference to her previous relationship. She describes her previous relationship with the father of her daughter, Lina (7) this way; *My boyfriend was abusive. He used to beat me a lot; I*

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<sup>101</sup> In fact he barely spent a single day without coming home. He would simply dump those newspapers at the back of the main house at home and because there was no one following him, the company tasked to deliver newspapers never found out about his mischief.

*don't know how I fell pregnant with his child... I was just being stupid! (Interview, 15 March 2010).*

Sizwe's place is toxic for her health but it offers her security in terms of food and accommodation. Other drug users supply her with drugs, and she knows that she can have other boyfriends or sexual partners around and Sizwe will accept her back. She also knows that when she is with her other boyfriends her children are cared for by Sizwe's family.

Sizwe never 'paid' anything for impregnating her as traditionally expected. This failure to meet cultural expectations means Sizwe has no rights over his sons. He evaded this cultural obligation because Minazana's family did not take any interest in her being pregnant and made no claims on Sizwe for damages. Both her children still have her surname and she collects their government grants. This has also caused fights with Sizwe because he wants access to the funds. In South Africa, children from poor families with no working parent qualify and receive government grant until the age of 18. Hall (ibid) reports that "the CSG (Child Support Grant) uptake has increased dramatically over the past decade, at the end of March 2014, a monthly CSG of R300 was paid to over 11.1 million children aged 0-17 years." She says "this is slightly down from 11.3 million in 2013" (ibid). These figures show the heavy dependency of poor children on the state. Often this money is the only stable and reliable source of income poor families have, as is the case with Sizwe. The only other source of income is Mams' old age government grant.

When Minazana was in labour Sizwe accompanied her to the clinic. By that time he had stopped going with her to her routine clinic visits because they did not have enough money for a taxi fare for two people. He stopped accompanying her when she was about four months pregnant. But another reason he cited related to the men's exclusion in topics related to pregnancy at the clinic. He says he spent most of his time there either in the waiting room or sitting outside because men were not allowed in discussion rooms where nurses were giving talks. He says when Minazana was in labour around 5am on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010:

*I was stopped by the security guards at the main entrance. In fact, they did not even allow Vuyehwa who is Minazana's cousin (her father's sister's daughter from Fish Hoek where Minazana spent most of her childhood life after her mother passed away), to go inside (with her). I mean she is a female but she had to sit on the bench outside that ward (midwife obstetrics unit - MOU). Before I left because it was clear that they would not let me in I went to buy her (Minazana) bananas and juice but still they refused to let me in. I had to leave those bananas with security to take inside to her so there was no point for me to stay there if I am not even allow inside the premises (Field notes, 23 March 2009).*

Security guards acted as gatekeepers and limited the time they would permit Sizwe and Vuyelwa to visit Minazana and the baby.

When they arrived, Minazana was sitting with the baby in her arms. She was told that she would be transferred to Mowbray maternity hospital because she had high blood pressure. It then transpired that the clinic had wanted to transfer her to Mowbray to deliver, but the baby came soon after she was given Nevirapine to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission. She said she felt fine, just tired after giving birth. She asked Sizwe as soon as he arrived ‘*ngubani igama lake*’ (What is his name?), but Sizwe didn’t answer. He seemed to be both awed by the baby and nervous. He said he was *too scared to hold the baby because it was so small*. Minazana’s cousin was taking pictures of the baby with her phone. At one point the nurse put her head round and started shouting Sizwe, saying: “*Why didn’t you bring the clothes for the baby? She hasn’t had a sheep; this is a human being she has had*” (Field notes, 23 March 2009).<sup>102</sup> Sizwe just stood there saying nothing, as did Vuyelwa and Minazana. Zukie pointed out he had brought the clothes. Njabu and Minazana only stayed one day at Mowbray hospital and were discharged the following day. Njabu did not require any additional treatment. Two months later when Njabu became sick Sizwe received the same dismissive treatment in Gugulethu clinic.

The Infants Project research team recorded numerous incidents where different clinic staff in Gugulethu conducted themselves in unfriendly manner towards men, findings confirmed in my own subsequent research. The behaviour of the health practitioners is pushing men away from the health facilities, undermining the government’s call to encourage men to accompany their female partners (see Dept. of Health, 2010). Furthermore, lack of resources and the unpredictable nature of birth makes it impossible to take day offs for fathers who work in unstable jobs in a country with more labour supply than demand. Morrell (2006:22) also states that in South Africa “for many working-class and particularly unemployed fathers, money and resources are scarce. Some men cannot provide for their children, and/ or find themselves working at great distances from their children.” Fathers cannot risk being laid off from their jobs because they would be no other source of income for the family. Some fathers had to balance between satisfying the wishes of their girlfriends and cultural expectations. Such fathers risk being labelled ‘women in men’s bodies’. There is a fine line in this

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<sup>102</sup> The nurses were always described by the field workers as very aggressive manner and shouting at mothers very loudly.

community regarding what men are allowed to do for children especially in public spaces and one's gendered identity is at stake in these performances.

Unemployed fathers in my study, where it was possible, attended births of their children and named their children. Where couples were unmarried, most pregnant women preferred to be closer to their families when giving birth and fathers only knew when babies were already born. This was particularly the case where relationships had problems like in Asanda, Mabhanti, Vuyo, Siyabulela, and in Thando's cases. Asanda's relationship was going through a difficult stage since his girlfriend fell pregnant. She wanted him to quit drugs and be responsible but his drug addiction was too much for him to quit instantly. Mabhanti's girlfriend's brothers hated him for impregnating their sister especially because he is a regular drug user. Vuyo's first child's mother lived in Khayelitsha and he says he was only informed after the baby was born when they wanted clothes and milk for his son. He said,

*No I don't have a problem I would have taken her to the clinic but I can't go inside the labour ward. I don't want to see blood and all that... father never went inside and no other men in my family has done that so I would be the first and the worst thing we are not even married, maybe if she was my wife. The other men in my family would definitely laugh at me for doing that, no I won't do that... (Interview, 10 June 2012).*

In Siyabulela's case, Nokuthula's brothers had already interfered in their relationship by asking him to pay compensation money for impregnating her at a *shebeen* and that angered him to a point where he abandoned his son.

Another important moment for parents living with HIV is to find out the status of their child. On the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Minazana and Zukie, one of the field workers who accompanied her to the clinic on her routine visits, had a clinic appointment where they were expecting Njabu's HIV test results. At age 6 weeks all infants born to HIV-positive women, irrespective of feeding option are tested (Dept. of Health, 2010:9). As we were all anxious about each child's results, I phoned Sizwe in the afternoon to find out but he did not know what I was talking about so I decided to visit the following day. On my arrival, I found Minazana was preparing to visit Sizwe's married sister in Kraaifontein who asked her to bring the baby because she wanted to see Njabu. After exchanging greetings she said to me, *"hey Ager it went well on that thing and I am so happy to know that the baby is ok"* (Field notes, 10 June 09; a delicate reference to his HIV-negative status.) But before I could ask her how Sizwe felt about the good news she continued,

*Can you believe that Sizwe didn't even ask me how it went? I told myself Andile that I am not going to tell him. He only asked me today about it after you phoned him yesterday. I was disappointed Andile by that because he should have seen from our facial expressions that we are happy and asked us (referring to Zukie). It just shows that amadoda awakhatbali (men don't care); as a mother you have to do everything (Field notes, 10 June 09).*

Sizwe's reaction to his son's results is puzzling. His reaction or none thereof could be seen as a sign of a father who does not care about the health of his son. One might identify him as a useless father, as some in his community do. But, having now worked with Sizwe for so long, I see a man who is really scared to deal with serious issues in his life, let alone the presence of HIV. Learning one's HIV status is a turning point in one's life. For some even counselling is never enough to assuage the fear. Commenting on fears people have when faced with the possibility of HIV, Cameron (in Steinberg, 2008:1) says "People are too scared – too ashamed – to come forward and claim what their government is now affording them: ...the right to stay alive ...In some horrifically constrained sense, they are choosing to die, rather than face the stigma of AIDS and find treatment." Steinberg (2008:7) describes the life of a man, Sizwe Magadla, who is well-educated and rich in his poor community who refuses to go and test despite the availability of the testing centre. His story shows that even though he has the knowledge about HIV because he has seen it taking lives of the people he knew well, pride, stigma and shame become obstacles for him to test. He knows that ARVs 'raise' people who are near to death but his worry about social status and manhood discourage him from learning his own status (Steinberg, 2008). Even treatment can be made available for free but stigma and shame makes it extremely difficult for people to learn about and take action over their status.

Sizwe does not know his own HIV status. To make matters worse when he finally did go after Minazana convinced him, the mobile testing centre near their home lost the sample and therefore could not tell him his results. He refused to test again. He knows that his girlfriend is infected. The decision not to know the truth both about his own HIV status and that of his son seems to give him some form of comfort than facing reality about the illness.

In trying to understand, I asked him why he did not ask Minazana when she arrived from the clinic. He said,

*I was waiting for her to tell me the results. Even if my son had tested positive my love for him would not have changed. But the fact the he's negative yho! Ta Ager indinike amandla, nditsbo ndomelela (it has*



*given me power, I'm now feeling strong). Now I don't have to worry about whether he's positive or not I just have to meet his needs, buy clothes and food for him (Field notes, 10 June 09).*

Sizwe's life shows the complexities of everyday survival. On one hand, it was 'a great moment' when he became a father but soon after those celebrations the reality set in about a much feared illness in his life when his son 'tested'. Apart from the stigma, people in this community do not talk directly about HIV but refer to it as 'this thing' (*lanto*) except when one is drunk. This makes it extremely difficult to confront this condition in people's lives. As we saw in Mfecane's (2011) work, even those who know their status and have 'accepted it' by joining a support group but they often find ways to hide it. Sizwe's masculinity in the sense of now being a father was quickly tested when he needed to be bold and learn about his son's HIV status. Clearly from his girlfriend's point of view, he failed to 'man up'. Sizwe and his friends never talk about their health problems, giving advice and support, except when one needs to be sent to hospital. This means he does not have strong emotional and social network systems around should he learn about his HIV status.

What we see in Sizwe's life is a man who was never prepared by his father how to be a man and a father. His own father had to be told by Mams when his children needed to be 'disciplined' which is a reflection on his own up-bringing by an absent mine labourer. Despite this, Sizwe felt 'fathered' and felt abandoned when his father left, never to return.

### **Abandonment and attachment**

*I didn't want this thing; my mother must care for him because she is the one who took him in when his mother died (Siyabulela, Field notes, 22 March 2013)*

Sometimes, unlike in Sizwe's case, a father abandons his child early – shortly after birth or even before. Sometimes a father may refuse responsibility. And sometimes a child incorporated into a family against a progenitor's wishes may be emotionally abandoned. I introduced Siyabulela in chapter three. As the extract above suggests, the acceptance of a child into a man's world is not automatic. The root cause of Siyabulelo's reaction started when Sihle's mother, Nobelungu, a young woman originally from Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, fell pregnant in a relationship he describe as *sasisenzanje* (Lit; *we were just playing* – see chapter six). She had lived with her *mamomncinci* (her aunt – her father's younger sister), who began to treat her badly, including denying her food, after she told her about the pregnancy. Nobelungu became friends with Nomonde who was employed and would offer her food and place to sleep because Siyabulela did not

want her in his *boki* and had another regular girlfriend and several other relationships. When Sihle, the child fathered by Siyabulela, was three Siyabulela started showing interest in Nobelungu again but the relationship was never stable because of Siyabulela's other relationships. Until Sihle, was five, Nobelungu was shifted between the houses of Nomonde and Zoleka, Siyabulela's sister, who helped her with caring for the baby. Eventually, Nobelungu went back to her aunt when Sihle was about five years old. She became ill and discovered that she was HIV positive. She was then admitted at the hospital in 2009 and died. The aunt denied knowing Nobelungu when the hospital phoned her, telling her about her death. Sihle was then aged seven.

Nomonde describe this period as the most difficult time for her and Sihle because she had to look for Nobelungu's family with almost no help from the aunt. Ultimately, Nobelungu's sick mother came to her funeral which was held at the aunt's house. But she could not take Sihle with her because she was too sick, and six months later she also passed on in Port Elizabeth. Nomonde continued to look after Sihle.

Siyabulela was furious that Nomonde agreed to look after Sihle and had not forced Nobelungu's mother to take Sihle. Since then he has never taken responsibility for his son. He gave Nomonde money to buy him clothes occasionally but there was no strong bond between him and his son.

Siyabulela's second son, Asenathi (3), lives in Mfuleni with his mother, Nokuthula. Asenathi was born in 2009 after his parents had been together for about 14 months. Siyabulela told me more than once that,

*I love my boy Asenathi a lot because I sat down with his mother and planned to have a child. I love his mother... yho! Nokuthula is the only girl that understood and satisfied me. It hurts me that we are no longer together but one day I will make things right between us. My brothers-in-law destroyed our relationship, cousin<sup>103</sup>. Yes I have not seen my boy in the past three years... three years Msuthu<sup>104</sup>. Hey he must be a big boy uGambu<sup>105</sup> now (Interview, 3 December 2012).*

Siyabulela's relationship with Nokuthula ended due to what he calls "*her brothers' interfering in our relationship*" by asking him at the *shebeen* (local tavern) to pay compensation money for impregnating their sister. He felt their actions were disrespectful because when their

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<sup>103</sup> When Siyabulela is drunk he calls me cousin because his grandmother had the same clan name as mine. But when he is sober he calls me Ta Ager just like all other men.

<sup>104</sup> Msuthu is my clan name which basically means Sotho. Our clan names are mostly but not always animal names and mine is rabbit.

<sup>105</sup> Gambu is Siyabulela's clan name.

family brought Nokuthula to his family the traditional way, he acknowledged the pregnancy and accepted responsibility although he did not actually pay the damages he promised.<sup>106</sup>

In November 2012 Siyabulela received a phone call from Nokuthula. She shouted at him saying:

*Why don't you come and see your son? You are such a useless father Siyabulela; you are confusing this child because now he keeps asking me who his father is and where are you... I don't know what to tell him because you are alive but wouldn't come and see him (Interview, 11 November 2012).*

In his conversation he made a promised to visit them on his pay day. He had had a few glasses of beer and cheap wine that morning and Nokuthula's call made him emotional. At the time, he had two girlfriends in Gugulethu and another one in Khayelitsha. After the call it became clear that he still wanted to renew their relationship. I offered to take him to Mfuleni the following week but he made himself consistently unavailable.

Siyabulela's own father died in 1992 but he hardly talks about him at any length except when he is drunk. Siyabulela is the only man in the study who lived in the same house with his father until he died. One of the life changing incidents that he always mentions is the period he spent with his father's girlfriend when his father chased away his mother. He decided to stay with his father and not go with his mother. He said, "As a man I could not chose my mother over my father. My sister went with her but for me; I decided to stay here (Interview, 11 November 2012). His masculinity was at stake. To go with his mother would have sent a message to his father that he is a weak man who sides with a woman. Despite his choice, he felt his father was cruel man for choosing his girlfriend over his wife. Living with *umamommcinci* ('aunt' – 'younger mother' or the wife who follows one's mother) was very difficult. In an interview he said,

*What kind of a man in his right mind would chase his wife and a daughter [Zoleka] away so that he can live with a girlfriend? I loved him as my father but what he did to my mother I cannot forgive him. His girlfriend was starving me here and I was not allowed to play in the house even when its cold or raining. She used to beat me for no reason, she was abusing me and my own father did not believe me (Interview, 3 December 2012).*

Despite Siyabulela's anger toward his own father, he disregards his own child. Sihle lives in the same household with his father but there is little direct interaction and care from him towards his son. Siyabulela's mother, Nomonde (67), cares for Sihle.

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<sup>106</sup> Traditionally when a man impregnates a woman outside marriage he is expected to pay *imali yesisu* (literally means stomach money; a payment for impregnating a woman), also known as *intlavnlo*.

By contrast, Vuyo (35), another father in my study, has a good relationship with his daughter. He always talks about her and have wonderful plans for her to go further in school. He plans to invest money for her education and hope that one day he might marry her mother. He shares money with Sindiswa, his girlfriend and mother of his daughter, when she asks for money for the child. His daughter lives with her mother and mother's family close to Vuyo's place. They see each other almost every day. His daughter spends time with Vuyo's mother when she wants to. However, he last saw his first born son when he was 2 years old. The boy is now 11. His son was removed from Khayelitsha by the mother's mother and sent to East London in Duncan Village to live with his grandmother, mother's mother for two reasons. Firstly, the grandmother was angry that Vuyo did not pay for 'damages' or contribute anything meaningful after the child was born. The child's mother came with the small baby one Friday evening without her (grandmother's knowledge) and she found Vuyo with another girlfriend in his *boki*. In township lingo they would say *wakrepha*<sup>107</sup> (to find one's lover with another girlfriend/boyfriend). She was forced to sleep in the main house. Secondly, the grandmother felt because the child is a boy he could not be allowed to grow up in Khayelitsha because of the threat of violence and gansterism. Vuyo and his family were not consulted about this decision. Since then he has never seen his son and any attempts to make contact with the child's mother have failed. He cannot trace her. When he was still in contact with the child's mother he says he requested for him to be returned back to Cape Town but the maternal family said, "*You must pay first for damaging our child and all the expenses we incurred in raising this child or you will never see him again*" (Interview, 4 Dec 2011). He seems to have given up on the possibility of seeing his son again.

*You see mfowethu (my brother) I wish my laaiti (Afrikaans term for a boy) could be here so that I can teach him survival strategies now. I don't know what information they feed him there. I survived township life and I can teach my son so many things where I made mistakes. You see here at home I am the only man, if ndiyacisha (I die) who is going to look after i-oledi? ('the old lady' - my mother). My brother lives in Khayelitsba. I want to send my own son to the bush (to be initiated) and be there because*

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<sup>107</sup> Under normal circumstances the main girlfriend is the one who sleeps over and the second one who might be *umakhwapheni* (secret lover) would either go back home or get alternative place to sleep over. Sometimes the boyfriend would ask his own sister to accommodate this woman or she would be forced to sleep on the floor in the same room with his boyfriend. In Xhosa we say *nyaqhunyeiselwa* (literally means being smoked at but in its everyday use it means watching and listening to others having sex in your presence). The chosen woman who eventually sleeps with the man would brag to her friends in the morning, something really humiliating to the unfortunate one. This is something even boys like to do to each other, to invite a girlfriend knowing that he shares a room with his brother or friend. It is done especially if the victim is considered to be *usibaka/unyabile/sisishumane* (a slow person or afraid of girls) to sharpen or encourage him to have a girlfriend.

*these laaities (plural) die there but if I am there I will look after him coz (because) he is my f.... flesh and blood my bru (Interview, 4 Dec 2011).*

What we see in all the stories described in this section is that acknowledging a child is insufficient; the father must take the next step and compensate the woman's family so that ancestral rituals could be performed for his child. Ideally these are performed soon after birth but these cultural obligations can be fulfilled later in life because there is no time or age limit. Indeed, his son might even initiate this process when he is older. I remind the reader of Songezo, my own father's son born from his affair outside his marriage to my mother, whose attempts to find his way are described in Chapter One. These stories show the complexity for African men in attaining attachment to their children. None of these men have been able to fully attach their children into their own lineages and therefore their children remain members of their maternal families. The sad part for the men in the maternal families who are currently playing the social fatherhood role for these children is that when they are old enough, because all of them are boys, chances are they will search for their 'biological fathers' mainly to trace their clan members and rituals, as Songezo did. Whether they will retain contact with their maternal families when they are able to provide for themselves remains to be seen.

One way in which children were traditionally attached to their father's families was through the *imbeleko* ritual which introduced a child to his paternal forebears. None of the children of the men in my sample had had this ritual performed for them. Indeed, many of my informants report that it is no longer practiced among urban residents. Both amaXhosa and amaZulu have a long standing practice when it comes to communicating with ancestors and that is *ukungxengxeza* (to apologise to the ancestors – this is done where the circumstances of the living makes it impossible to perform what is needed by ancestors). Reasons could range to a recently passed away person in the family to all sorts of other hindrance but the most common one is lack of resources. Usually one would go to the kraals entrance and talk to the ancestors, apologising for not being able to perform the ritual and ask his ancestors to give him/her money resources (money) to that their wish can be fulfilled. Sometimes *ukungxengxeza* is done by slaughtering a smaller animal – a goat instead of a cow – than what is expected of them and one would explain the reason to his elders who have moved on in life). Because all my informants were complaining about lack of resources hence *imbeleko* has not been done in most cases, I expected them to at least apologise to their ancestors but this was

done in Njabu's case only. This could mean that either people in the urban area do not see the importance of apologising to the ancestors or they are not aware of it.<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, none of the children in my study had been *ukuqatyma* (the 'painting' – this is another ritual performed for children either by slaughtering a goat, sheep or a cow. The child remains behind the door with someone who has been *vaqatyma* (painted) for most of the time during this three day period. The person who looks after him/her does not have to be an elder; it can be another child as long s/he has had his *ukuqatyma*. The initiate will be painted with a white *imbola* (ochre) and would have beads on his neck and around his wrists. Before the animal is slaughtered an elder would bring the animal closer to the door of the house and talk to the initiate to be, asking to live a better life if s/he was a troubling child and ask ancestors to protect the child. The initiate remain half naked behind the door. The initiate will eat his/her part first before anyone, using a sharpened wood stick to feed him and his meat will not have salt.). Another ritual performed for some children is the cutting of a finger (*inqgithi*<sup>109</sup>). Not all clans follow this cultural practice but those who do like in my case, it is believed that a boy for instance cannot go through circumcision without having *inqgithi* (cutting of a finger); otherwise his manhood wound might never heal during initiation.

## Concluding remarks

The forms of life men like Sizwe lead is marked by a lack of access to resources. Consequently, life itself becomes uncertain. Sizwe, like the rest of his family and all the

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<sup>108</sup> It is a question that I struggled to introduce in our conversations because it would have meant that I reminded them of something they would not have done had I not brought it up. Of course there is a possibility of them saying they did not see its relevance and importance.

<sup>109</sup> I personally experienced this ritual, which went horribly wrong from the moment it was performed and almost took my life in 1997. I had just returned from Grahamstown for Christmas holiday with my father when it was decided that before I go back to do my matric I should have my *inqgithi* done so that there would be no obstacles when I went 'to the bush' in December. My drunken uncle performed the cutting with his bread knife. In the middle of his cutting off my finger, he realised that he missed the joint and I could not feel the pain in my bone, he ran to the kraal to find a rock to sharpen his knife again. He was now visibly depressed and getting back to his senses that what he was doing was not right. Usually, just like initiation – foreskin cutting, the initiate is covered his eyes or forced to look on a different side but I always insisted in watching what is being done to me. When he ran towards the kraal, I was left watching my blood streaming off my finger. After he managed to finish the cutting I had already worn my *intambo* (cow tail necklace). *Intambo* is there to assist in stopping blood once the ritual is done and help with the healing as well. To treat *inqgithi* we use *umqamfu wempuku* (rat faeces). But in my case someone suggested that we should also use fine soil because it helps to heal fast as I was about to go back to school. I got tetanus and was in coma for 4 months in an ICU in East London. When I eventually woke up I did not return immediately to school. My late brother took me to his house to recover in Johannesburg. The recovery process was painful as a reminder that what was meant to ease my manhood healing turned out to be a near-death experience.

men in the study, lives from hand-to-mouth. Their life circumstances, including drug-dependence, make it difficult to think and make the effort to plan for tomorrow. Sizwe's narrative in particular show us how violence, drugs, poverty, poor history of meaningful relationships including that with his father, and the general legacy of apartheid shaped individual's lives. The men's complicated lives may not be representative of the whole community but they give a glimpse of a neighbourhood where individual's daily survival is in constant threat. In a context where death is a norm, living a reckless life characterised by drug abuse, womanising, and dangerous criminal acts seems admissible. The unpredictability of life in Gugulethu reminds one of Veena Das and Kleinman's (2000:1) observation that, in the last two decades or so

A new political geography of the world has emerged..., in which whole areas are marked off as "violence-prone areas," suggesting that the more traditional spatial divisions, comprising metropolitan centers and peripheral colonies ...are now linguistically obsolete. The violence in these areas seems to belong to a new moment in history: it certainly cannot be understood through earlier theories of contractual violence or a classification of just and unjust wars, for its most disturbing feature is that it has occurred between social actors who lived in the same locale worlds and knew or thought they knew each other.

Sizwe's life, similar to all the other men in this study, is mainly restricted to his Section 3 of Gugulethu.

What I observed in Gugulethu is no accident. Institutions of family and kinship were targeted and singled out for destruction by the apartheid government through its inhumane policies and brutal forces (Reynolds, 1984, 2000; Ramphele, 2000). Reynolds' (ibid) gives narratives of young men who were able to forge models of masculinity through engagement with the political process but men like Sizwe live a life of social displacement and alienation. Ramphele's (2000) essay on the other hand point to broken intergenerational<sup>110</sup> connections where young boys were forced to fight against their own fathers where the latter were in control of the squatter camps through the assistance by the state police. These wars between fathers and sons played a significant role in the erosion of some of the core Xhosa values such as *intlonipho* (respect) for elders.

Young men who did not have fathers themselves to learn from, are now expected to step up to positions of adulthood and responsibility. Most men in this study

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<sup>110</sup> The kind of relationships that used to exist between fathers and sons were heavily affected in negative ways during this period. The apartheid government strategy to divide black families was very deep in dismantling strong ties that used to prevail.

had their mothers or a mother figure present most of their lives in the absence of men but the role these women often played as shown in Mams case was not a positive one. Mams herself is ambivalent about her social status.

Sizwe's story show a close connection between morality and emotional relationships, no matter its impact to those directed at. We have seen in chapter 3 that even the state organs that are meant to assist families and children have failed. His lack of fathering to his children reveals what happens when families, kinship disintegrate, and state institutions abandon or are insufficient to the needs of those who are vulnerable, including the men themselves. Throughout his life, Sizwe had very complicated relationships with people around him. He has been unable to live up to either the hegemonic model of masculinity suggested by initiation rituals and the life worlds create, or to his family's expectations of him as a provider.

Connell (2005) draws our attention to the fact that even in one cultural setting there are different versions of what it means to be a man. This is evident among the initiated amaXhosa men who interact with Sizwe. *Amadoda welokishi or onolokishi* ("Township men") with whom I worked are accommodative in their approach to men like Sizwe whereas *onolali* or *amadoda asezilalini* (rural or countryside men) do not compromise on 'man' versus 'boy' differences. Firstly, in my study these tensions emanate between those who perform the ritual in the countryside through *ingcibi* (a traditional surgeon), and those initiates within the same group but for different reasons as alluded to by Thando Mgqolozana (2009), finish their circumcision in hospitals and not 'in the bush'. This has serious implications for the future of such young men in the community. The second category of these conflicts is between *onolali* and *onolokishi* (township men). Both these terms carry derogatory meanings. *Unolali* (singular) is associated with darkness, backwardness and those thought of to be in need of civilisation, whereas *unolokishi* (singular) is seen as someone who is modern, 'current'. *Unolali* regard *unolokishi* as lacking traditional ways of life and therefore useless to communal life. Such men are often labelled as 'lost'. Countrymen see themselves as superior, as representing 'real Xhosa men' because they *stick* to *traditions* whereas *onolokishi* are viewed as 'lesser men'. The last group of men who are regarded as boys



despite them also having the mark<sup>111</sup> engraved on their bodies are those who perform their initiation in hospitals, often referred to as *amakhwenkwe* (boys), *amadoda kanesi* (Nurse's men).

I suggest therefore that it is within these complex circles of manhood that we must understand Sizwe's double life styles. What these categories tell us is that, everyday face-to-face interactions and conversations between men are conducted with awareness that sudden violence could erupt anytime. Using the complex dynamics of Sizwe's family, I have argued that one can be regarded as a man, in spite of being a boy or woman but through their deeds, thus offering some flexibility in social identity. For example, despite not having been initiated, Sizwe is able to draw on diverse repertoires to afford himself some semblance of belonging. Many of my participants constantly navigate between these spaces when interacting with other employed friends who have money. They do not let themselves down but try to fit in, even when this means relying on one's mother to provide sustenance and life's means.

In describing the performance of a young South African artist, Gregory Vuyani Maqoma, Henderson (2014:12) takes us through his life where he return to his great ancestor in the past, returning to the present as an act of doubling. She (2014:12) remarks that

In its circular form, moving from the present into the past and back again, *Exit/Exist* seemed to evince a compelling form of doubling, Maqoma having inhabited the story of his ancestor within his own life and body, carrying lingering traces of the past. Just as one might argue that Maqoma came to embody his ancestor, through his enactment he created a "bridge," as it were, for his ancestor to travel into the present, as a witness to the contemporary world where he still has a tangible presence through his descendants and various forms of memorialisation.

Similarly, Sizwe is a very creative performer. He is able to disguise himself and live in another world of initiated men even though it is temporary. He uses his body in similar ways to *ilovane* (a chameleon). However, there are limits to the effectiveness of this flexibility. When he reaches those limits, the result is violence or despair, and an inability to step up to the demands of relationships, including fathering.

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<sup>111</sup> Again *ukudodisa* (man's initiation interrogation) is used to establish whether a man has stitches on his penis or he healed through the use of *isichwe*. Hospital stitches are easily identified and once found out one can even be beaten up for being accused of taking chances with real men.

## Chapter Six

### The makings of relationships and their failings

The previous chapter provided thick descriptions of a complex life. In this chapter I describe the making and failures of relationships as a way of making sense of these men's lives. At a very superficial level, education is considered an entryway from poverty for poor children. In other words, if children from poor families equip themselves with education (qualifications), the assumption is that they should be able to get good paying jobs to change their lives. This has been the message from the African National Congress (ANC) led government in South Africa since taking over governance in 1994, and we have seen billions of rands spent on education. However, reality is far more complex than this logic. To make sense of my informants' failure to finish school, I draw on Bourdieu's views on education especially because his work is regarded in this area to be one of the few coherent accounts of the central role that the schools have in reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next, while at the same time allowing for human agency (Harker, 1984:117). In his analysis of the role of education in reproducing these inequalities, Bourdieu (1973; 1974) maintains that it is the dominant group that control the economic, social and political resources whose culture is embodied in the schools. He asks us to think of cultural capital in the same way we think of economic capital. "Just as our dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital, so our educational institutions are structured to favour those who already possess cultural capital, defined according to the criteria of the dominant hegemony" (Harker, 1984:118). From Bourdieu's perspective, the assumption that if black children are given access to education like their white counter parts, it shall be easy for them to compete in the job market at a later stage is therefore highly problematic. It is important therefore that the levels of drop out from school by my informants be viewed in terms of these contributing factors but, as I will show, local meanings of manhood are important in shaping success. A man has to be physically strong, and jobs such as working behind the desk are seen as women like for the weak.

Furthermore, we know that every society has different ways of relating and raising children, which is by and large determined by a child's age and gender. The Nguni

people are no different. The child's moulding practices are constantly being modified from generation to generation. Commenting on the outcomes of these differences, Ramphela (2000:111-2) argues that among the Xhosa people, "[boys]...are given the freedom, or indeed the license to act irresponsibly. They have to misbehave for fear of being regarded as effeminate (a *morphie* in local terminology), but it may also be related to the low level of expectation of good behavior which leaves boys with little to strive for in setting behavioural goals for themselves". This is an important observation because it speaks directly to the narratives of my informants; hence, I use it as base in thinking through and explaining why the majority of the men with whom I worked, like their own fathers, are, as I have demonstrated, also failing their own children.

In thinking along the same lines, it is important for me to account for these intergenerational failings. Are these failures only due to the ways that these men were raised as suggested by Ramphela or there is more to it? To better explain these intergenerational failings, I find Willis's book, *"Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs"* (1977) useful. Although he conducted his ethnographic material with a group of White working class high school students in a British industrial town, the similarities with my study make it useful in explaining the driving characteristics of these failures among the men with whom I worked. Willis asks, how is social reproduction sustained on the individual level, and how can one account for the subordinates' agreement with their condition? Willis (1977) points to the contradiction in the fact that, the working class "lads" he studied are happy to go work at a factory and experience it as their own free choice, while this "choice" works to preserve their social condition and class oppression. He dismisses the common belief that children from poor families get drawn to low class jobs because they are less capable as individuals. Willis finds his informants are not less talented, but they do develop hatred towards the "work hard, move forward" mentality of modern education, and develop what Willis terms a "counter school culture".

Likewise, the majority of the men with whom I worked had a bright future ahead of them but it was never realised for reasons I provide below. Drawing on Willis, I argue that what connects youth attitudes to education and their sexual identities is their counterculture.

This then take me to another important theme which I explore in this chapter and that is young men and women's involvement with different sexual partners

simultaneously. We have already seen examples of this in the discussion of Sizwe and his compatriots' lives. One body of literature in which the question of sexual identity and multiple relationships is addressed is in the literature on concurrency as it emerged during the HIV pandemic.<sup>112</sup> A number of scholars, particularly epidemiologists (Morris & Kretzschmar, 1997; Legarde et al. 2001), have discussed the problem of concurrent partnerships in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa, showing how these relationships contribute to the rapid spread of HIV epidemic within specific ethnic groups in Africa. These studies dismiss the view that HIV is “for poor people”. A study that was conducted between 2003-2005 from eight sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania, LeSotho, Malawi, and Uganda) found that in all eight countries, both men and women, adults in the wealthiest quintiles had a higher prevalence of HIV than those in the poorer quintiles (Mishra *et al*, 2007). Similarly, two cohort studies from South Africa have also confirmed the finding that HIV is not simply a disease of poverty (Barnighausen *et al*, 2007; Hargreaves *et al*, 2007). The question then is, if poverty, as these studies show, is not the driving force as normally believed in public discourse, how can we account for differences in infections among South Africans? One way of doing this, I would argue, is to look closely at the ways that sexual behaviours are understood. To do so, I examine practices of *udlalani* (a ‘player’) and *isifebe* (a loose woman). Studies in South Africa have also shown how the dominant masculinities shape men’s sometimes violent control over women, demand for “flesh to flesh” sex, and celebration of multiple partners (Campbell, 1997, Wood & Jewkes, 2001, in Hunter, 2005:390).

Other important themes in this chapter include the exchange of gifts without money, violence as a form of control over women, and the meanings of these relationships especially for children. In the literature, money is often seen and indeed cited as an enabling factor for men to ‘womanise’ because women tend to prefer a man who can provide for them (Mfecane, 2011; Fuller, 2003). Hunter’s (2010) work in KwaZulu-Natal province also corroborates this where young women mention money as motivation for dating “sugar-daddies”. In my study though, the men with whom I worked do not have such money to spoil their women because many of them are unemployed. Yet, like the men in the previous studies, my informants are not short of

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<sup>112</sup> While none of the men in my study admitted to knowing their HIV-status, I do know the status of some of their girlfriends and children as a consequence of earlier research for the Infants’ Project, from which my study derives.

women to have sex with. The question then is how do these men manage to attract many different women for sex even though they do not give them money? I argue in this chapter that the social significance of *udlalani* enables men to achieve ‘womanising’ as a form of social status; ownership of a *bokkie* and a bed is another form of enticing women.

With regards to the status of children in Nguni societies, Sean Jones (1992:249-50) explains how children in traditional African society acquire their familial status. He states that “...in terms of the patrilineal principles prevalent in it, a man obtains rights over his wife and her offspring by payment of bridewealth to her family. The wife’s family, in turn, forfeits rights in *genetricum* over her” (1992:249). Most importantly, he remarks that if the bride wealth has not been completed, “...the maternal kin may nevertheless invoke their jural rights over children of a marriage for which bride wealth has not been fully received...” (1992:250). With this in mind, I present in this chapter narratives of children born in and out of wedlock to show the complexities involved in everyday life and how these might complicate children’s lives and identities.

In recent years, long standing cultural practices such as *lobolo* and *intlawulo/imali yesisu* (compensation for impregnating women out of wedlock), sa we’ve seen have come under scrutiny, with some blaming these customs for the declines in marriage rate among blacks in South Africa. Shope (2006:65) in, ‘*Lobola Is Here to Stay*’: rural black women and the contradictory meanings of lobolo in post-apartheid South Africa, argues that “lobolo is an enduring custom that offers insight into past and present gender and power relations. It has survived colonial and missionary cultural attacks and changing economic and political structures.” She also state that when Europeans first arrived in Africa, they saw this practice as a commodification of women against their will sometimes to the highest bidder which in turn legitimised their slavery to the husband (ibid). But, for those who practice it, *lobolo* has a complete different meaning and purpose; as anthropologists have understood it, it validated the exchange of women’s reproductive and labour power. The youth in Gugulethu also question the purpose and relevance of these traditional practices. Their narratives give an indication to the choices and justifications people make in choosing which aspects of their tradition favour their circumstances, while either rejecting or questioning those that might empower women for instance. In the absence of regular ‘decent’ income, most of my male informants believe that practices such as these need to be reviewed and its function must be redefined. For obvious reasons,

women such as Neliswa, whose relationship with Ta Pat forms the basis of the discussion in this chapter, remain in full support of *lobola* and vehemently oppose changes to its traditional form. Such debates form an important theme in this chapter.

Bride-wealth transfers are rarely completed by most African men. None of the fathers of my informants who were married ever finished paying *ilobola*. The question then is, if *ilobola* plays such an important function in cementing marriages, why do most women including my own mother and Neliswa continue to stay in marriage unions even if the payment is not finished? In chapter 1, I shared my own mother's experience as she had to endure what she describe as cruel treatment from her in-laws to a point where her baby died because she had no time to care for her. The testimonies I share in the chapter show that the women in relationships with the men in my sample felt they had no choice but to stay in these unions out of fear, dependence and respect for their own parents. It was considered a disgrace to the father of a married woman should she leave her marriage because her father would have to return the *ilobola* cattle. Such a woman is stigmatised as *umabuyekwendeni* (the one who left marriage) or *woyiswa ngumzi* (the one who failed in her marriage). Marriage as an analytic category will form an important part of my discussion in this chapter because the manner in which is practiced in Gugulethu requires a careful analysis of its daily use. I explore this by looking closely at Neliswa and Ta Pat's living arrangements and their understandings of them. Neliswa and Ta Pat, have different descriptions of their living arrangements. She sees it as *umhlaliswano* (cohabitation) while for him it is a marriage. The nature of this union raises important questions for me, why would a woman chose a man she describe as *umgulukundu katsotsi* ('a thug') as a life partner? Like Sizwe, Neliswa performs her life in this union like a chameleon between rural and urban settings.

To understand the status of a child in South Africa, it is important to look at the key changes in marriage policies since the birth of democracy to see how the new changes protect the child's well-being. Marriage policies show that the country has come a long way to improve children's legal status especially for those born out of wedlock. This has been done through the establishment of boundaries on what constitutes *marriage* in post 1994 period. In 1998 the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, Act 12 of 1998 was passed. Prior to this, the Marriage Act of 1961 was the only law which provided for recognition of marriages. The Act did not recognise relationships formalised according to indigenous African rites ("customary marriages" or *imitshato*

*yesintu* – traditional marriages) as well as relationships formalised in accordance with Hindu or Muslim law (Budlender, Chobokoene, & Simelane, 2004:3). Before 1994, relationships that were formalised according to African indigenous customs were legalised by the apartheid government but were not recognised as marriages. The 1961 marriage law made it impossible for mothers of children who were considered illegitimate to claim maintenance from progenitors. Because maintenance could not be made against a person who was not present, men were able to evade it, leaving mothers to support children on their own (Bonthuys, 2008). Now that such discriminatory policies no longer punish ‘illegitimate’ children, I describe the roles or lack thereof fathers play in their children’s well-being.

Furthermore, the decline in employment mean that getting married is becoming more of an exception than a norm among black women. This does not imply that marriages among Africans were complete in terms of bride-wealth transfers. Posel and Rudwick (2013:169) report that “...marriage rates are substantially lower among African women than White women, and that this gap in marriage rates has widened over the post-apartheid period.” But, they report that “...African women are as likely as White women to be mothers” (ibid). Similar to my findings in this study, Posel and Rudwick (ibid) found that “cohabitation rates are lower among African women than White women. As a result, a much larger share of African mothers is never married (and not cohabiting) compared to White mothers.” These forms of relationships “...have significant implications for the well-being of children, because children are considerably less vulnerable to poverty if their mother is married or cohabiting with a partner” (ibid). As I’ve shown, most of the children in my study live with their maternal family and often with limited father’s involvement, if at all. In fact, the South African Child Gauge (2014:91) reports that

The proportion of children living with both parents decreased from 39% in 2002 to 35% in 2012. Thirty-nine percent of all children – more than seven million children – live with their mothers but not with their fathers. Only 3% of children live in households where their fathers are present and their mothers absent. Twenty-three percent do not have either of their biological parents living with them.

It is therefore important to understand why some fathers abandon or have little contact with their children. Below in this chapter I describe the barriers to father-child interaction. Among these prohibiting factors is a child’s mother or her family that might act as gatekeepers towards the father. Men and their preferred lifestyles are found in this

study to spoil relationships with either their girlfriends or her family which lead to them losing contact with their children.

### Father-son relations and other clan male figures

*I never saw my father... I am told that my father is still alive... to me he is dead (Ta Pat, Interview, 13 April 2012).*

Ten of my male informants were born and raised in Cape Town and have had very little mobility in their lives. These men have no regular contact with other kin members from the countryside. Such relatives only exist in memory. In fact, even Ta Pat (44) and Sizwe (35), the only men born in the countryside in my sample, have only vague recollections of their early childhood there. We have already seen Sizwe's complex family life and the ways that it shapes his masculine identity. I turn now to focus on Ta Pat, the oldest man in my sample. Again, I draw on material from the broader sample and my wider research in considering men's relationships.

Ta Pat was born in a rural village adjacent to a small town known as Tsomo, in what is now the Eastern Cape Province. The town derives its name from Tsomo, named after a Xhosa Chief who lived there in 1877. At the age of 4, Ta Pat's mother brought him to Cape Town. By that time he had not met his father, whom his mother was divorcing. His father remained in Tsomo and has never visited Cape Town again. He used to work as a "garden boy"<sup>113</sup> in Cape Town but when his contract ended he had to return to the village.

In Cape Town, Ta Pat's mother found *ikerexe*<sup>114</sup> (a lover), a man whom Ta Pat recognised as *utata*<sup>115</sup> (my father) until he was told that *akangotata wakho wamanyani* ('he is not your real father'). Finding out "the truth" about this man did not stop Ta Pat from

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<sup>113</sup> A phrase frequently used during colonialism and apartheid to describe African men.

<sup>114</sup> Terminology regarding lovers in Xhosa changes with age and social status. Unlike young people who call each other *sithandwa sam* (my lover), older people especially someone who is married or divorced refer to their lover as *ikerexe*, a term that carries and signifies respect. It is considered inappropriate for older people to be expressing love in public in Nguni societies. It is extremely offensive for adults to be seen for instance kissing on the street as such behaviour is considered to be sending wrong message to children. This does not mean in today's it does not happen.

<sup>115</sup> *Utata* (father) is a Xhosa term used to show respect to any man, including non-relatives, old enough to be given such respect. In Zulu the term is *ubaba* with the same meaning.



calling him *tata*<sup>116</sup>. *Ikerexe* is usually called *tatomncinci* (young father) by the children of the woman in love with such a man. *Tatomncinci* is also a term of respect and addressing ones father's younger brother(s) and all the clan men who are younger than one's own father. One's father's older brother(s) or other clan men who are older than one's father in chronological age are called *tatomkbulu*<sup>117</sup> (grandfather/old man) in Xhosa.

Despite the presence of a father figure clearly as such, the absence of what he and his family considered his 'natural' father in his life brought bitterness to him. In an interview he expressed his visible anger,

*I never saw my father. I was raised by utata (father) and that is the man I respect even though he is no longer with my mother now. I am told that my father is still alive back in our village... I don't want anything to do with him because maybe if he was there for me, making sure I continue with my schooling, I would not have turned out like this [a criminal], to me he is dead. I will not even go to his funeral. I don't even go to him when we go home for family funerals and he does not come to our family also. I don't know what happened between him and my mother and now I don't care (Interview, 13 April 2012 emphasis added).*

Here we see an absolute rejection. It means a lot for a Xhosa man to even utter such words considering the significance, symbolism and respect given to people when they die and funerals by black people in his community and the beliefs that the dead can make one's life a living hell if not given the respect associated with death. By and large, people say of my informants that they refuse to take responsibility in situations where their manhood ought to prevail. They always blame others for failings in their lives. Ta Pat has also failed to ensure that his own son, Abongile, goes further with his education. His son is already a repeat offender, just like his father. The general trend with my informants, Ta Pat included, is a recurrence of intergenerational failures influenced by rejection of schooling in favour of gangsterism, rebellion, violence, becoming 'a women's man', and admiration of bad older men in the community. This situation where fathers fail their children generation after generation because of 'short cuts in life', attempts to get rich instantly through robbery and rejection of school system is similar to what Willis (1977) describes as a counterculture built on a working class repertoire of privileging practical knowledge, life experience and the performance of a "street wisdom" mentality over theoretical knowledge. For Willis (1977), 'the lads' praise of hard manual labor, displaying

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<sup>116</sup> So despite everything else that happened in his early childhood, there was a father figure in his life and in fact he continued calling him as such.

<sup>117</sup> This *tatomkbulu* is different from *ixhego* who is also known as *tatomkbulu* as explained in chapter 4, as a sign of respect for an old man due to his age.

chauvinistic masculinity and challenging obedience is the very same “mentality” that is failing them.

Ta Pat’s father’s absence meant that ancestral rituals such as *imbeleko* were never performed for him by his paternal family. In his case his maternal family also never took up that responsibility. As he says, *andaziva mna ngabaphantsi* (‘the deceased do not know me’) despite my mother being *igqirha*<sup>118</sup> (traditional healer) (*Interview, 13 April 2012*). Ta Pat’s stance on his father’s family was contradictory: he rejected his paternal family but still wanted to retain their rituals such as *imbeleko*. Commenting on repercussions for children whom their fathers fail to acknowledge and incorporate children, Ramphele (2000:104) remarks that “The loss of fathers does complicate the lives of children anywhere in the world, but it is a particular handicap in a community where fathers are the key to the entry into the world of men. [In most Nguni societies] it is the father who names one, introduces one to ancestors in the ritual of *imbeleko*...”

Among the Xhosa men, clan names forms an important part of one’s identity. Most of the men in Gugulethu do not use *iziduko* in daily conversations but *iziduko* (plural - salute clan names) are as important as *ukwaluka* (initiation) especially when a new (an outsider) man joins a group of other men, whether socially or for ceremonies. As a man, one is expected to introduce himself by his *isiduko* (singular- salute clan name) to other men. In doing so, it shows that one is a man, having been initiated and having endured the hardships and pain that initiation involves. One’s *isiduko* also acts as a welcome if others in the group share. Indeed, we have already seen Sizwe’s honorary inclusion among men by the generous extension of the use of his clan name by his peers. But most importantly it shows that one knows *ingcambu zakhe* or *imvelaphi yakhe* (one’s roots – both phrases mean the same thing) as a Xhosa man. The failure to master this traditional identification has severe consequences for a man, including the epithet *ilawu*.<sup>119</sup> Wilson and Mafeje also commented in their field work in Langa in the early 1960s that “...among the townees, and young people generally, *iziduko* are out of fashion. The use of clan names has been largely displaced by the use of surnames which [were] required in all official contexts and in dealings with whites” (1963:76). Among the group in

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<sup>118</sup> It is not common practice for *igqirha* to perform/lead rituals her/himself at home. S/he must hire another healer to do that and pay that healer. However, for rituals such as *imbeleko* there is no need for hiring *igqirha* to lead the ceremony, it is a family ritual that can be led by any ordinary clan man.

<sup>119</sup> Pejorative: A Coloured person; used in association with the Xhosa belief that Coloured people have no roots or background to trace their being. Among those with whom I worked it is an insult to be called *ilawu*.

Gugulethu, the most popular way of addressing each other's friends is to use a nickname which sometimes is drawn from one's name. For instance, in my case I am either called in Gugulethu Ta Ager or Ace. The use of Ta instead of just saying Ager or Ace is to give respect and acknowledge that one has been through initiation. (No boy can be called Ta because it is a form of respecting those who have been circumcised.)

Ta Pat often changes between his mother's and father's clan names. In an urban context this is not such a big problem for him on a daily basis but in the countryside he says other men do confront him about this issue, wanting to know when is he planning to address it. What one might call an identity crisis here has generational effects; he is likely to pass on his ambivalent clan status to his own progeny since he has failed to deal with it. Normally a man would prepare *umqombothi* (traditional fermented beer) to do *ukuqazisa* (to formally introduce himself) to the whole community before he goes for circumcision. In other words, the absence of a clear clan name or even dual<sup>120</sup> clan names is very problematic for any man in Nguni societies. In Xhosa such a man would be called *ilose*<sup>121</sup> (the lost one).

There is a great deal of abandonment in Ta Pat's life which he uses to justify his failings as a man and a father himself. His life is full of contradictions. One hand, he wants to be a man focused on his wife and children; on the other, when his gang members call, he becomes a different person all together because he knows that his fearless character is needed. He does not report to his wife where he will be going and if she tries to ask, he put her in her place to silence her.

Reflecting on what the failure to perform rituals for him might mean for his identity, that of his children and whether he is performing these rituals for his children he said, *if you are a boy you cannot take your children to initiation school because you will be expected to respect them, to call them ngesiduko (clan name) and not their names because they are now man and according to Xhosa culture you are a boy [no matter your age]. So the same applies with rituals like imbeleko that was suppose to be done for me. I cannot do imbeleko for them which I didn't have (Interview, 13 April 2012)*. Ta Pat's family described him as a man who refuses to take

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<sup>120</sup> When a man introduces himself, he normally begins by *ukuqithutha* (praising himself) through reciting his father's clan name and then move to his mothers. This not only shows that he knows his roots but it acknowledges the role and contributions of his mother's side.

<sup>121</sup> Such a person is not called *umqakbwe* because the latter (*umqakbwe*) refers to a child born within marriage but from a different father and not the woman's husband.

blame for his failings. They say whenever things go wrong in his life; he is quick to put the blame to other people. For instance, his wife believes that he could have easily asked any man from his clan to lead when he performs rituals for his children. It was certainly not usual for most of my informants to find comfort by blaming others and this justifies in them failure to take action as would normally be expected from a man or household head.

Interestingly, despite most of the men in my study having little contact with rural relations they still, like Ta Pat, refer to rural areas as *ekhaya*<sup>122</sup> (home) and not the Cape Town house. Funerals now provide a rare chance for kin members to meet and exchange contacts. The general practice in areas like Gugulethu when family members die, is to be transported back to *emaXhoseni* (the Xhosa place). Because of this, it is shameful for anyone not to have *umbutho* (a burial society membership) because such failures only become a burden<sup>123</sup> to relatives. A relative is anyone who shares the same surname, connected through marriage to the clan. People from the same village often feel obliged to contribute in such unforeseen instances because they feel some connection to the deceased or might contribute to avoid being seen as uncaring (*akakhathali*). Such people together with their families are named and shamed during funerals in the villages and youth is often warned not to follow their behaviour. It is for this reason therefore that I also agree with Sahlins (2013:2) conception of what he calls “mutuality of being” that is “people who are intrinsic to one another’s existence – thus “mutual person(s),” “life itself,” “intersubjective belonging,” “transbodily being,” and the like. Yet in the context in which I work, cultural ideas about belonging also limit this mutuality. For example, Ta Pat did not have the same kind of connectedness to his father and while he had a present father-figure, nevertheless, he considers himself abandoned.

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<sup>122</sup> I have already explained the meaning of this term in chapter 4 with reference to Ross’s (2010) work in The Park.

<sup>123</sup> The general practice by blacks in big cities across South Africa is to bury their relatives in the former Transkei now known as Eastern Cape. This is done to keep ancestors together especially because big cities do not have a permanent attachment or at least not until recently. This practice of sending the dead home is highly expensive these days because a minibus taxi has to be hired to pull a trailer with mourners back to the countryside. The journey is roughly between 12 and 14 hours. Burying relatives in the cities is highly stigmatised. It is regarded by black people as throwing relatives/ancestors to a foreign land and embarrassment that causes a lot of gossip from those who know them.

## Ta Pat and marriages

Like his father, Ta Pat has struggled in both his marriages to remain faithful. Ta Pat's first wife, Abongile's mother, died in 2007. There is a lot of uncertainty around her death. According to Neliswa, *umama ka-Abongile wadutyulwa kuqala (Abongile's mother was first shot) but she survived (Interview, 1 March 2012)*. Rumour had it that someone had been hired to kill her. Then in 2007 the rumour is that she was poisoned and fingers seem to point to her mother-in-law. No court case was ever opened so this remains speculation. While he was still married to his wife, Ta Pat had an affair with Neliswa, who fell pregnant in 1996. They both say that out of respect for his first wife, their affair remained a secret to Abongile's mother. She is still the official co-owner of the house with Ta Pat.

After Abongile's mother died, Neliswa moved in to live with Ta Pat and they have lived together since then, except when he was in prison. Their daughter was sent to live in Eastern Cape with her maternal grandparents because Neliswa was working in factories. Ta Pat's mother, apart from being a traditional healer and busy, was never asked to look after their daughter. Over time it became clear to me that Neliswa was not on good terms with her mother-in-law, something that started before she moved in with her husband. She is seen as someone who is going to take over *ilifa* (inheritance) should Ta Pat die.

Neliswa and Ta Pat often fight because of the women's messages on his mobile phone or his disappearance. She does not seem to have anticipated that the 'cheating' he was doing with her while married might also happen when they lived together. Neliswa says by moving together with him she thought he would not have a desire for other women but she now knows that she was wrong. The literature on concurrency does not give much hope in terms of people's ability to positively modify their sexual behaviour and concentrate on one main partner especially in poor settings.<sup>124</sup>

Both Ta Pat and Neliswa have different descriptions of their relationship and living arrangement. As mentioned earlier, she sees it as *umhlaliswano* (cohabitation), whereas for him what they have is *umtshato* (marriage). Ta Pat has already bought her marriage ring which is kept in the house but she does not wear it in Cape Town. The ring

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<sup>124</sup> Maturity through age is also not a good predictor of sexual behaviour change especially in the era of *Ben 10s* (old people craving sexual encounters with younger children).

is there to not only put pressure on her to submit but also as confirmation to other clan members in the countryside that he is married. She says he has been asking her to go with him to the magistrate to finalise their marriage and get a marriage certificate but she refuses to do so, saying:

*Marrying him would be like committing suicide. He likes to threaten me with a gun even when we are just fighting<sup>125</sup>. But also I am the one who has more valuable things here. This house was empty when I moved in after his wife's death. Her family [Abongile's mother's family] took everything here. And also I have two houses in Delft so if I marry him those will go to him should he decide to get rid of me... no one knows how his first wife died (Interview, 1 March 2012).*

There is lack of trust and constant fear for her life. She worries that he wants to marry her so that he can benefit from all her assets. Her interpretation of their relationship is in line with other women with a rural connection in South Africa. A study by Shope (2006:70) found that women "...are not cultural dupes; they are aware of how some men appropriate and manipulate ... custom to suit their interests." Although Neliswa succumb to many of Ta Pat's demands, payment of *lobolo* is one traditional practice she knows that should she give up and sign the binding marriage certificate, he will have complete control over her life and her family would have gotten nothing in that exchange. One might say that she is using his failure to pay *lobola* to buy time.

The meaning and purpose of *ilobola* is not always clear. Shope (2006:65) argues that "In the past, *lobolo* forged a relational bond among families, and, as the older women in the community recall, it celebrated the addition of the woman into the husband's family." A reconsideration of this practice might just help more young women to find marriage. As studies show, marriage rate among blacks is at its lowest ever.

It is here, at the intersection of the past and the present, and gender and cultural relations, that we find many of South Africa's black rural women holding on to what they wish to preserve and challenging what they wish to change. They are attempting to renegotiate the practice by emphasising the relational aspects of the tradition while downplaying its gender obligations (Shope, 2006:71).

It is certainly the only weapon Neliswa had to force her man respect her family. Interestingly, despite her refusal to wear the ring as a symbol of a modern marriage, she did submit and wear the ring when she went to the Eastern Cape for funerals because in that part of the world people think that she is married to a 'decent man'. Much like the way Sizwe plays with the options available to him, Neliswa's situation with non *lobola* payment and the ring enabled her to live double lives with different identities. In the

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<sup>125</sup> This means an argument which translates as *ukuxabana* in Xhosa language.

countryside she was happy to portray herself as a married woman by wearing *iqhiya* (head cloth), *amadakehi*<sup>126</sup>, and *isikhafu* (a scarf one wears around her waist as a sign of respect to elders and ancestors. It also marks that such a woman is married). She obliged by meeting the expectations of the people in the Eastern Cape when she went there. Yet, despite portraying herself as a married woman, she said that as long as he has not paid *lobola*, “for me siyahlalisana nje” (we are just cohabiting). For her, marriage means meeting the cultural obligations.

As stated by Jones (1992) a man acquires right for children by making *lobola* payment and as long as this is not complete, the maternal family may invoke its jural rights over children of a marriage with incomplete *lobola*. This means therefore, Ta Pat has no rights over his children because he has not even started the payment but claims to have a wife. Despite this, interestingly, Neliswa allowed their two sons, Ndoda (5) and Avuyile (20 months), to use their father’s surname. But their first three daughters used Neliswa’s surname. All three girls lived with Neliswa’s father who passed away in 2013 in Eastern Cape. Their first-born daughter is reportedly refusing to come and live with her parents in Cape Town because she sees her father as an abusive man who shouts and beat them for no apparent reason. By giving permission for their two sons to use their father’s surname, Neliswa is submitting to his understanding that they are indeed married, and strengthens his claims to rights to them in case of a dispute.

I believe that women’s tolerance to stay in unions such as Neliswa’s relationship with Ta Pat need to be understood from two perspectives, apart from the often claimed stereotypical view that women seem to have the natural ability to withstand hardships. Firstly, due to *intlonipho* (respect) and *uloyiko* (fear) of their own fathers in particular which is instilled to a child at a very young age, many women who tolerate the most abusive husbands and in-laws have no alternative. Poverty in one’s family also plays an important role in women’s perseverance. Old Xhosa expressions often used to encourage young girls to withstand such abuse such as *emzini kunyanyanyezelwa* (‘in marriage you must endure hardship’) make women believe that it is acceptable to be treated in a bad manner. Instead of encouraging them to question such bad treatment, newly married wives are taught to see this as a learning experience to empower them so that one has a story to tell her own marriage. Kuckertz (1997:312) argues that “In Xhosa culture, the most

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<sup>126</sup> Distinctive blue or brown cloth and used by amaXhosa to make an outfit for a newly married bride. The Xhosa traditional outfit is *isikhakha* made of a cow skin usually wore by women during traditional ceremonies)

fundamental moral prescription is the need to show respect to lineage seniors as (*ukublonipha*), indeed, to all members of the senior generation.” Women’s submission does not happen by accident, they are taught from the very early age to obey and submit to men. In turn this ensures that patriarchal system is able to sustain and reproduce itself to the benefit of men.

Secondly, as shown earlier in this chapter, marriage for most black women is an exception than a norm these days mainly due to men’s inability to meet cultural expectations such as *lobola* and women’s desires to live independently. Nevertheless it is also the case that marriage bestows a highly valued social status. It seems to me when an opportunity present itself for one to be seen in her community as *wendile* (married), some women might consider or even tolerate the worst men available. This is because in Xhosa communities, once a female reaches mid to late twenties she is considered *ushinye lixesha* (someone for whom time has run out) or *ududelwe nguJambasi* (*Jambas*<sup>127</sup> has danced on her – she has missed marriage – a label no woman wants). *Ukududelwe nguJambasi* is an insult to unmarried women and it is intended to put them in a category of their own as a marker of their failure to attract husbands.

I believe that to view Neliswa as simply an obedient woman in this union with Ta Pat would be simplistic. This is a woman who utilised her knowledge of both systems, the traditional and urban understandings of being married, to her full advantage. She knows both systems as a ‘village’ as well as ‘town’ girl. She knew for her to continue benefiting from this man she must appear to be compliant. The villagers and clan members in Ta Pat’s village might even say “What a lovely and respectful daughter-in-law we have” but if they were to come to town they would find a different person. She is dextrous in managing appearances and relationships; in meeting social norms and contesting them.<sup>128</sup> Those relationships are a true reflection of the fact that power is not permanent. Neliswa was very smart in playing the same game that Ta Pat played. Indeed, just as men historically sent remittances to rural homesteads, she used her daughters’ placement in her natal home in the Eastern Cape as a means to secure her own well-being into the future by sending money to her family. Her family benefitted in some ways by her being in this union with this man. And that was key for her own relationship with her family should things turn sour one day. She could not afford to lose contact

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<sup>127</sup> *Ujambasi* refers to a baboon. Some Xhosa people have adopted it as their clan name for *amaMfene/oolisa* – the baboons)

<sup>128</sup> Her behaviour in this respect is resonant of how people navigate power relations more generally; I am reminded of the relationship between a domestic worker and her employer, here.



with her family completely. Despite the fact that she is considered a “married woman” in the community, her family knows that there was never *ukwendiselana* (i.e. a proper marriage negotiation was never undertaken) between the two families and therefore they can refuse to accept some of her children. Her actions thus give her room to manoeuvre and give her family space to benefit and to negotiate.

### **Spoilt young men? Mothers at fault?**

*Ubangomnye umthwalo ebazalini (you also become an added load to your parents) (Interview, 10 Jan 2012).*

Eight of the twelve men in my project depend on their mothers’ state pension or disability grants for their survival. Only Ta Pat, Abna (both married), Mabhanti and Shayela fend continuously for themselves and their children. The other eight men rely on their mothers for food, clothing, shelter, and sometimes receive “*imali yokuzonwabisa*” (money for enjoyment) which they often use for drugs and alcohol and fancy clothes.<sup>129</sup> This way in which mothers show their love and protection of their sons is considered by many men emasculating. Such men argue that men in this position might never feel the need to fend for themselves because their mothers still treat them like young children. For example, Vuyo (35), like Sizwe, is one father who has never had a formal job in his life or even tried to find employment since I met him. His mother meets all his needs, including *imali yokuzonwabisa*.

Most men in my study admire and respect the affection they receive from their mothers. None of the mothers, according to the men in this study, were forceful when these men suddenly stopped attending school. Their mothers were always sympathetic to their sons’ alienation from school. Only one mother found a solution by moving her son to another province. Sadly it came too late for her other son, who was killed at home. Other mothers were supportive of their sons leaving school with no plans in place for their future. It is possible that some of the mothers feel obliged to maintain their sons’ needs because they are also to blame for their failures in life. Certainly, this is what some people with whom I have spoken believe. Parents such as Vuyo’s mother capitulate to peer pressure when seeing other young men and women sitting in *shebeens* drinking alcohol and eating meat. Instead of using these moments to motivate her son to seek

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<sup>129</sup> Youth in this community, including my informants, do not wear cheap clothes especially on weekends. I always felt like I am wearing *amafong kong* (popular local name for well-known brand imitations) especially among Vuyo’s group.

employment, she would give him money to join them. This is understood by locals as a classic case of ‘spoiling’ these young men to a point where if this money is not given they feel obliged to demand it. Such behaviour and tendencies undermine one’s masculine identity in his community. Such men are considered ‘boys’ even though they have been through *ukwaluka* (circumcision). In describing his relationship with his mother, Vuyo says:

*Hey mfowethu andidlali nge-oledy lam (hey my brother I love my mother). She is always there for me. When I am arrested I know she is going to make a plan to bail me out. She hates seeing me sleeping in jail. Of course she shouts at me but we have a good relationship my brother. She knows I smoke dagga and do crime... she does not like what I am doing because she provide for us with my sister, Nono, but hey she knows she can't give me everything I need. I am a man so kumele ndididize mfowethu (I must make a plan my brother) (Interview, 4 Dec 2011; my emphasis).*

‘I am a man’, Vuyo says. To be a man here means completing the initiation process rather than achieving a masculine ideal through one’s deeds because although he knows he has to work he has never made any attempts to find work. Instead of teaching him a lesson to be responsible, his mother would even borrow money to bail him out. This kind of mothering presence is widely considered to have a negative impact on men like Vuyo. It is felt that by always defending her son, his mother did not teach him to develop a strong sense of responsibility and accountability. It is unlikely that his late father would give him the same treatment; as we saw in earlier chapters, it is more likely that he would have received a beating while young. We have seen earlier in this chapter that Ramphela (2000) blames culture; particularly the way boys are raised in black communities which encourage young men to be irresponsible. Similarly, what we see in these female headed households is motherly love that is widely held to be destroying these young men, stopping them from searching for employment and making plans to build their own houses.

Be that as it may, often the role mothers play in their sons’ life is not always fully explored. It is generally taken for granted as part of mothering duties. As I showed in Sizwe’s case in chapter 4, a mother’s presence was not always positive. Likewise, Ta Pat’s mother plays a major role *ebugintseni bakhe* (in his gangster) lifestyle, going so far as to bathe him with traditional ‘luck’ herbs so that he can evade the police and bullets. He says, *ndiyafutha, ndigabhe* (I steam and vomit) *with herbs to clean myself. Court cases are nothing once they release me [once he gets bail]. It is very difficult to work on a case when they lock me inside because I cannot use izinto zam* (‘my things’ – traditional medications) *there* (13 April 2012).

Often when men are asked about their reasons for doing criminal activities that put their lives at risk, they cite their inability to secure employment while there is a need to support one's family. I tested their claims by assessing whether the money they made was used to benefit their children. It became clear that for most, the money is used on drugs, and entertaining girlfriends rather than supporting their children. In fact, their household income is derived mainly from rent money and state child support grants.

What then is the meaning men attach to the act of participating in crime itself? Ta Pat seemed to get much satisfaction. He had been in many gun fights and carries their scars. Such scars play an important role in acquiring "*intlōniphō*" (respect) among one's peers. Elders often complain about lack of respect from today's youth, displayed in many aspects such as school children kissing in public (something the previous generations avoided), smoking, drinking and use of vulgar language. From Ta Pat's interactions with his gang members it was clear that "*intlōniphō*" as a critical cultural practice has not disappeared but its content and referents have changed. All his gang members call him *tayma* (father –a more modernised version of *utata*; a term of respect). Ta Pat commands respect because he has reputation of being fearless. His men praise him and obey his orders. The scars on his body mean that he has survived "close calls" or "near death" experiences; a marker of a brave and strong man. Violence, risk taking and danger forms an integral part of young boys and men's construction of their masculinity in South Africa. Shefer *et al* (2008:2) remark that risk-taking points to "...the dangers of being male in South Africa – the way the world responds to boys and men; the way they are expected by their peers and elders to perform their masculinity; and the enmeshment of masculinity with violence, risk-taking, and danger." In the community, *amagintsa* (gangsters) are feared and this gives men with not much to brag about in terms of resources some form of status, power and control.

Another man in my sample, Ntemie, an unmarried father, owes his life to his mother. Ntemie was sent to the Eastern Cape after his brother had been ambushed at home by an opposition gang group. His mother also negotiated with his school for a transfer. Furthermore, his emotional attachment to his ex-girlfriend and mother of his daughter led to him resigning from his job. This meant he had to depend on his mother (41), a cleaner at a bank, and his grandmother's government grant. These are the people who also support in raising his daughter. In describing his relationship with his mother he says,

*Hey Ta Ager my mother and my grandmother are helping me a lot especially with Sesethu (his 5 year old daughter). They buy food for her especially when she was still young because she had her own food which is expensive, they bought it for her. Yes nam ndandididiza (I was also making plans). Things are much easier now because she also eat what everyone eats in the house. So now they focus on buying clothes for her. It is not easy my brother because my mother can see that hey my son does not have shoes also so she buy clothes for me as well. It's difficult to have a child when you are not working, ubangomnye umthwalo ebaqalini (you become an added load to your parents) but at least Sesethu's grant money helps a lot on her things like crèche fees because now she started going there so that she can be ready for school. I want her to study Ta Ager so that she can have a better life than mine (Interview, 10 Jan 2012).*

Ntemie recognises the load he adds to limited household resources but he has never gone back to his employers or look for another job. He performs 'piece jobs' within his neighbourhood; 'quick' money that enables him to buy drugs immediately. His mother had to build her own *bokie* so that she could host Ntemie's father. She describe Ntemie's father as *lazy and useless*, adding, *I just hope Ntemie does not follow on his footsteps* (Field notes, 22 Sept 2012). He is clearly resistant to do what is required by the society from a young man, and in all likelihood his drug-use and the lack of means to end it, stands in the way of accomplishing such goals.

Ntemie is grateful for the support he is getting from his mother and grandmother,

*There were times Ta Ager when I felt like taking my life because of the stress... thinking how am I going to support my daughter, where is her mother, what is she doing? Is she not thinking about this child we brought to this world together? I was stressing really but my grandmother would sit down with me and talk to me. She would tell me stories about her own life, how my grandfather was cheating on her. Also my mother told me that as long as she is still working I should not worry she will support her granddaughter but I should make sure that I don't impregnate another girl with all my anger. I don't know how I could have done it without their support (Interview, 10 Jan 2012).*

Often men highlighted the important role their mothers and in his case his grandmother played in giving guidance and emotional support. Here, the role of women in the household has been positive in supporting and enabling life; that of Ntemie and his child, and of the household at large.

Player's mother by contrast prefers him to perform 'his mischief' at home mainly to avoid confrontations and fights with his enemies on the street. Like other mothers in this study, she knows and seems to have accepted the use of drugs in her yard despite being a leader in her community, the chairperson of the street committee. In one of our conversations, she openly said: *I never thought Player would live this long because he get into serious stuff... gun pointing shop owners, robing people their belongings and fighting for girls* (Field notes, 22 August 2012). She plays an important protective role for her son but most importantly her leadership position shields Player. People would normally come to report cases of petty crimes to her but could not report Player to his own protective mother

even if they suspected him. People are afraid of Player and his group; “whistle blowers” might become targets.

Player’s parents divorced in 1984 when he was 10 years old. Since then he never had a good relationship with his father. He says,

*I get involved in crime sometimes simple because I am angry inside. I just want to inflict pain to another person because I have a lot of unanswered questions, like why my parents got divorced. It is only now that I’m realising that the pain I’m causing to other people is physical yet mine is emotional (Field notes, 10 Feb 2012).*

He told me that he never had a close relationship with his father. “I do not understand my father. Yes we do talk but I never got to know him as my father” (Field notes, 10 Feb 2012). Player links his anger with his parents to his violent behaviour in the present. His testimony points to how parents avoid explaining personal circumstances such as why parents are no longer together to children. At the age of 30, his mother has never sat down with him and explained the reason(s) for their separation. Marriage problems are seen as adult affairs only, and this is problematic because children form part of marriages. The Western normative idea therefore which emphasises that children should be listened to as well is not held here, where it is believed that children should be excluded from both adult decision-making and explanation. Player’s mother simply dismissed the issue as unimportant in our conversations.

As an unemployed young father, Player also depends on his mother to help raise his children.

*My mother supports my children... [they] eat everything children of their age are supposed to get. I would have long lost contact with my children because Yonela’s mother came here several times by her car wanting to take my children away saying that we are feeding small children drugs<sup>130</sup> here. They had a bad exchange of words with my mother because my mother felt she was insulting her parenting style. So my mother protected me and told her that she will always make sure that they have food. In the end she (Yonela’s mother) took our first-born only (Interview, 1 May 2012).*

Yonela’s mother’s “interference” presents interesting perspectives on both women’s parenting styles, and the bypassing of paternal responsibility. Yonela’s mother did not allow the use of drugs in her house. Yonela disliked the discipline and ran away, finding a ‘loose home’ in Player’s family where she did as she liked, returning to her mother’s home when she felt like it. In this she is similar to Sizwe’s partner, Minazana, who also ran away from their parents who were ready to provide for them and their children. Men

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<sup>130</sup> I have seen their children, especially Njabu (Sizwe’s son) and Anam (Player’s son), sniffing remains of dagga *zolies*.

are expected to move out of their fathers houses to build their own elsewhere while with unmarried girls the understanding is that they will remain at home.

Most of the men in my sample identify their mothers as *providers* especially for food, clothing, money and shelter. The second common role often mentioned by men with regard to their mothers' role is that of a *protector*. We have already seen how mothers and grandmothers protect Player, Ntemie and Ta Pat, sometimes even in criminal behaviours. The last important role men identified is that of an *emotional supporter*. Vuyo, Sizwe and Siyabulela all report that their fathers were cruel towards them because they beat them but their mothers were always there to give emotional support and would also give them food secretly without the father's knowledge. Only Shayela blamed his mother for what he turned out to be, a drug addict. He says, *I am a spoilt brat, my parents spoiled me... they gave me everything I wanted as a child and never said no to me*. As these three roles demonstrate, women can and do take up activities ideally identified as masculine roles.

Staying at home is beneficial to the men as one does not have to worry about the source of support. However, it comes at the price of one's dignity. Before many women joined the labour force, it was unthinkable for a black man to be provided for by women, as such failures depict one as *isifede sendoda* (a useless man), an insult to one's manhood and social status. Generally, not much is expected from *isifede*. Men who provide or at least contribute to the household's upkeep retain their social value and respect. In fact, the contributions they make might give them leverage when it comes to claiming ownership of property after parents pass on.

For me, there are strong resonances with Willis' (1977) study of reproduction - how generation after generation in black communities successfully fail to break the poverty circle - and resistance. The very choices that these young men took, firstly in choosing their friends, both in the community as well as at school, was critical in maintaining their failure at school, determining and predicting how far they will go in school. Most of their friends fit the category of *ongantweni* (plural – individuals who show no sense of purpose in life)<sup>131</sup>. Secondly, all the men with whom I worked had the potential to succeed in sport, music, or at school especially in art work or mechanical

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<sup>131</sup> The term *ungantweni* (singular) is different from *inja* (a dog) because *ungantweni* applies to both men and women.

engineering<sup>132</sup> but such potential was never realised. Wanting to be seen as “the man” in the community, and enacting this either through violence or “womanising” became their downfall. While the political economy of apartheid made it a lot easier for the general populace to secure employment without any formal education, now things are different, some form of qualification is ‘a must have’ in securing a job. These are the jobs that define “real men” in working class communities (Willis, 1977). It is therefore easy to see why these men have failed in life and are likely to fail their own children. The absence of good fathering in their lives is now transferred to their own children, hence a reproduction of failure. But it is difficult to account for individuals with similar background who go on to achieve greater things in life, hence showing resistance to the dominant culture. With all these in mind, in the next section I look at how these tendencies and behaviour might impact on the men’s ability to form and maintain relationships with their girlfriends and those around her.

### **Relationship with the child’s mother and her family**

The nature of relationships between fathers and their child’s mother can reveal a lot about the men’s ability to interact and get involved in their children’s lives. I argue in this section that for fathers to be able to perform paternal functions as proposed by Gavin, *et al*<sup>133</sup> (2002:268; see chapter three) which include endowment, protection, provision, formation, and caregiving, the kind of relationship he has with the ***child’s maternal family*** is essential. I have already suggested that it is men’s mothers who perform many of these functions for the men in my sample. Research, especially in psychology, has a lot to say about how the nature of relationships between young fathers and the child’s mother can facilitate or prohibit his involvement (Kalil *et al*, 2005; Quinton *et al*, 2002). Studies found that, mothers sometimes play the role of a gatekeeper, depending on their relationship with the father; the role can be supportive or constraining to the father-child interaction (Furstenberg, 1995; Lamb, 1987; McAdoo, 1993). Others have also noted the importance of the mother’s family, viewing it as also critical in providing an enabling environment for the father to get involved with his child

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<sup>132</sup> Men like Player have very sophisticated skills in repairing phones without any formal education or training on it. Vuyo, Mabhanti, Ta Pat are all good in cars both mechanically as well as body works without any training.

<sup>133</sup> See literature review for further discussion on this.

(Devault *et al*, 2008). These findings speak directly to some of the issues and tendencies I observed among my informants, particularly where the men encounter resistance from the women's family to have access to interact with his child.

Six of my informants encountered challenges in seeing their children and were explicit about the difficulties they faced from the child's mother's family. In some cases it is the child's mother who prevents the father from seeing the child. Consequently, these challenges led to the breakdown of the father-child relationship permanently. In some cases it is the father who ruined the relationship with either his girlfriend (child's mother) or her family. For example, Mabhanti's (29) relationship with his daughter, Noluvuyo (11) is hanging by the thread. He believes that he has not done anything wrong to be receiving bad treatment from her mother's brothers which has resulted in him being prohibited from seeing his daughter.<sup>134</sup> In this interview he told me about the animosity with Tsego's<sup>135</sup> brothers:

*M: these people... they do not like me especially her brothers. When they see me... their approach towards me, you will be shocked*

*A: huh?*

*M: Even when I see them at the restaurant (pause) even if its full and he needs parking space, he will never find it from me. I let him pass, even though I need the money*

*A: So you do not get on at all?*

*M: Oh no, siyinyoka nesele (we are like a snake and frog – i.e. enemies) Ta Ager, to the extent that I also do not want anything that will bring us together. They say their sister was corrupted by me here in Cape Town. Because they had no idea why they brought her to come and study in Cape Town (from Bloemfontein). They brought her to Cape Town where she met a skollie (gangster) like me. They call me names Ta Ager but I told myself that all these names they are calling and the stories I need to remove them from me, you see? Even if they keep on putting stories after stories, you see? What I was trying to show was that I am the kind of person who knows how to cope, how to do things that no one expects of me*

*A: Are you still together with their sister?*

*M: No, even though she still wants us to be together*

*A: mhm*

*M: I told myself that I no longer want anything to do with her because if I go back to her, a lot of stuff will go wrong. A lot of stuff will go wrong. Because their attitude, hey!*

*A: ok!*

*M: I do not like their attitude. At the very same time, these people are highly learned and tell themselves that they are high standard. You see now? They use to ask their child what she was thinking when she met a skollie like me, you see.*

*A: mhm*

*M: They wanted her to explain this to them. She told them that no, that does no concern you. It only requires me and the person I met. Any other person should not be concerned, sothey want to include themselves in something that does not concern them*

*A: If you say that you paid for damaging their sister, what makes them dislike you the way that they do? Because you also told me that some money was taken from your bank account by them...*

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<sup>134</sup> Mabhanti is never reticent to speak. Our conversations could go on for hours sometimes. Because he exaggerates anything positive about himself, I carefully verified his claims from his close friends like Sizwe.

<sup>135</sup> Tsego is a Sotho woman and the mother of his daughter, Noluvuyo.



*M: hey what can I say Ta Ager, what can I say! I think they hear stories about me, wrong stories*

*A: uh eh*

*M: Hearing some stuff... stuff like he also smoke weed, drugs and all that shit. Of course I smoke drugs but its none of their business. I met their sister and we fell in love but now they refuse to allow me to see my daughter. When my daughter visit (come to Gugulethu from Bloemfontein) they don't want me to see her. Last year in September for school holidays but I could only watch her playing inside the yard. They say I should not be allowed to spend time with her because I am skollie. It hurts Ta Ager because I love my daughter. The only thing they want is my money*

*A: What is Tsego saying?*

*M: Nothing. Sometimes I have to look for ATMs at night to deposit money to Bloemfontein because they say my daughter is sick they need money for transport to take her to hospital. It feels like I am being punished (Interview, 31 Jan 2012).*

Of the unmarried fathers, Mabhanti is the only one who attempts to send remittances regularly. He sent between 80 and 800 Rand at least eight times in 2012 to Bloemfontein where his daughter lives. He sees himself as supportive and finds it unacceptable that educated people treat him badly. He does not view it as his responsibility to behave in an acceptable manner by modifying his lifestyle so that this educated family could tolerate him despite his lack of social standing. He is quick to judge their treatment in defence of their sister as bad. He sees himself as a responsible father. He also makes the effort to “be there” even at a distance for his daughter whenever he gets a chance or is allowed to see her, thereby building a strong bond with her but the child’s mother’s family prevents him. He meets all the paternal functions outlined above; he has acknowledged his daughter, had he been allowed by maternal family to interact with Noluvuyo he is most likely to play the protection role, he is providing for her. But he is not allowed near her and cannot play an active role in her life at such a distance.

His situation certainly forces us to think carefully about the meaning of father’s involvement in different contexts. What kind of a role model would he be to his daughter with his lifestyle? How should one explain these contradictions in his life and fathering practice? Is material support not what a child need from the father so that she can buy food, clothes and pay school fees? Mabhanti is considered “the best father” in terms of his financial contribution compared to most other unmarried men in this study. Siyabulela, for example, did not sent anything to his son who lives in nearby Mfuleni and does little for his first-born son, Sihle, who lives with him. In a country where it is estimated that about 50% of fathers do not have daily contact with their children (Richter & Morrell, 2008), it should be a worrying factor to have willing fathers being side-lined. Mabhanti, no matter how much he tries to “be there” for his daughter, he does not meet Tsego’s family social values.

Vuyo's situation is similar to Mabhanti's. Both men had similar childhoods. Both are from failed marriages, and both became regular drug users, angering their girlfriends' families. Sindiswa's, Vuyo's girlfriend, father hated him. Vuyo explains their relationship as follows:

*When I wanted to see Sindiswa I had to wait outside or send in a kid to call her for me or I would call their landline. If he answered the phone he would say bello and I would say may I please talk to Sindiswa. And he would reply, Sindiswa! Lenja yakho ifuna uthetha nawe (This dog of yours wants to talk to you). He truly did not like me, so he couldn't care less about my money. The person whom I get on well with is her mother- her mother and mine get on well. I understood his position, no man like his daughter to date a criminal because I am not a good example even to our daughter because of my background but Masindi knows I have changed now (Interview, 4 Dec 2011).*

Despite the antagonism, he was never prohibited from seeing his daughter. However, his lifestyle has cost him dearly in relation to his other girlfriend's family who lives in Khayelitsha. As mentioned before his son was sent back to the Eastern Cape where he lives with his maternal family. As a consequence of maternal decisions about child well-being, there is no paternal involvement. Both these men's girlfriends' families' interference has a direct impact on the father-child relationship. Of course, this is not to suggest that the fathers are innocent of wrong-doing; my informants' way of life go a long way in explaining the breakdown in father-child relationships.

What we see from these narratives is how intergenerational father absence is perpetuated among black families in South Africa. These men did not have good fathering themselves, and now their absence in their own children's lives is likely to have the same effect on their children. Men's absence extends to women's well-being too: a study in Khayelitsha found that "...a lack of social support for the woman from her partner was significantly related to postpartum depression at two months (Cooper et al, 1999). The child growing up in the absence of a father is expected always to have emotional difficulties because there might be an absence of other clan men living regularly in an urban household he can relate to. Psychological research suggests that infants become attached to their fathers at about 8 – 10 months (Lamb, 1981), making early connection with children critical for them. However, the ways the men in my sample perform masculinity militate against close connection. It seems that this is true of other kinds of relations too, not just those with children. I turn now to an investigation of men's sexual and intimate relations.

## Wheelbarrows, spare wheels and armpit lovers

The above terms, popular in the townships especially among youth, are used by my informants to describe their sexual partners or secret lovers. What the literature calls ‘concurrency’ is explained by men and women I worked with in Gugulethu as simple desire, rather than a transactional relationship as is so often suggested in the HIV literature. Instead, I argue that the men with whom I worked engage in ‘sex games’ to achieve a social status of *udlalani* (a player or womaniser). Ten of my informants regularly engage in sexual relationships with different women other than their primary girlfriends. These relationships are the most men talked about in everyday conversations despite the claims that there is no emotional attachment involved and the understanding that these should remain secret. Of course, ‘womanising’ and its link to performative masculine identity-making is not a new or ethnically specific phenomenon. In Gugulethu, it is described as *siyatyana nje ukuzonwabisa* (“sex for fun”) and is embraced by both men and women. It is worth noting though that my informants not only perform these sexual games for social status but the reality is that sex is good and it gives them pleasure. Hence some girls are referred to as *imnandi laweyi* than other girls because in bed she performs better than others. ‘Better’ is evaluated in terms of their taste and wildness. The cases I share in this section have been selected because they depict everyday life for the men I worked with in Gugulethu but also they provide a wonderful opportunity to make sense of the implications for children who are born out of these encounters. Effectively, the practise of *udlalani* means having what the literature refers to as “concurrent relationships”.

Seven of the fathers, Siyabulela, Asanda, Vuyo, Mabhanti, Ntemie, Thando, and Player, admitted that their children were not planned but resulted from ‘mistakes’ while they were “just having fun”. They claimed that they did not consider the possibilities of impregnating their sex partners in just 1 or 2 days. They attribute this view to the fact that in their relationships pregnancies took longer than just a few days. None of them used condoms to prevent such pregnancies and infections while ‘playing’. Five of them said they thought the female was using contraceptives. My informants do not regard these encounters as *relationships*; for them this is just a game played *ngumdlalo nje wokuchitha isithukuthezi* (“out of boredom”) to “have fun.”

Both acts of “play” for *udlalani* (womaniser) and *isifebe* (a loose woman<sup>136</sup>) have serious implications for children born out of these casual sexual encounters. I explore several cases below.

Early in 2012, Mabhanti became involved in one of these games with a woman in her early twenties. The young woman already had two boyfriends, both of whom knew about each other. In early March she fell pregnant. She was not certain who the father was. The men refused paternity testing due to its high cost. Ultimately, a solution was reached; an elderly woman would perform *ukufaniswa kosana* (an evaluation of the baby) once born to ascertain the real father.

Despite being considered “a spare wheel” or “armpit lover” (*umakhwapheni*), Mabhanti, excited about the pregnancy and the thought that he had fathered a second child, unveiled himself, telling his friends that he was the father. He did not however initiate any “damages payments”. He then began to intervene in the woman’s lifestyle. He ordered her to stop using drugs during pregnancy saying, “*I do not want to have a mentally disturbed child because of you smoking drugs.*” He told me “*I also told her that as soon as she gives birth I will take that thing [she is carrying] and give it to umamomncinci (my aunt) because I cannot allow my child to grow up kwavula zibhuqe (a loose family)*” (Interview, 31 Jan 12). Ironically, he did not modify his own behaviour, including drug-use to try to set an example. This is a typical patriarchal behaviour.

His attempt to control this woman’s lifestyle only led to them fighting. She refused to stop using drugs demanding that Mabhanti should also stop. He refused, saying that his smoking did not affect the baby she was carrying. Within a month of their public arguments, she told him that he was not the father of the baby. Both her other boyfriends started claiming paternity. One of the men had a particular interest in this pregnancy. In his mid-forties, he had not fathered a child so he refused to be side-lined. By the time the baby was born, Mabhanti had “moved on with his life”, as people say. He had a new girlfriend and two other occasional sexual partners. He lost interest in the child even though he still contemplated the possibility that he might be the father. He

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<sup>136</sup> *Isifebe* is different to *umakhwapheni* (armpits lover). The latter is a secret lover. *Umakhwapheni* is more than a sexual partner; there might be gifts exchanges and expectations for other favours. Either both or one of the partners is in a serious relationship or even married and *umakhwapheni* is expected to respect that relationship by never revealing her/himself in public. My informants are aware of this term but they never described their sexual encounters in this category.

said he could not waste his time clinging to one woman because “*there are many fishes in the sea; I have found the biggest one now*” (Field notes, 10 Nov 12).

There are a few issues to digest from this story. Firstly, it is common for two men to date a woman simultaneously. Such behaviour is consistent with findings of general trends in the concurrency literature<sup>137</sup>. In South Africa, a study by Mah (2008:15-6) found that

The overall population frequency of concurrency increases to 18%, with 27% of young men and 9% of young women reporting concurrency. Over 41% and 18% of young Black men and women report concurrency during any previous partnership, while 23% and 3% of Coloured young men and women, and 5% of White young men and 5% of White young women report concurrency.

My female friends and informants in Gugulethu believe that the present, characterised by so much uncertainty, does not allow one to “live like a wheelbarrow”, a reference to its single wheel. Nevertheless, such behaviour is stigmatised; because of her involvement with the three men at the same time, Mabhanti’s lover was called *isifebe* (a loose woman) even by Mabhanti himself.

Secondly, the issue of proving paternity is critical. The use of elders to determine or identify the “real” father is a long standing African way of determining child’s paternity in situations where there is uncertainty. To what extent do all the actors involved believe in its accuracy and live up to its social expectations? Let us return to Mabhanti’s ‘armpit lover’ and her child. After the baby was born, I learned that a decision had been made by the elders. They identified the man in his mid-forties as the father. The other, younger man was also still in the picture as a lover. He did not contest the elders’ decision. The man chosen has a full-time job unlike the youth and had already shown signs that he would provide for his son long before he was born. It seems that a decision in the best interests of the child was made by the elders, and this was not contested.

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<sup>137</sup> A recent study in the Eastern part of Zimbabwe (Eaton, *et al*, 2014) link declines in the prevalence of HIV infections to the population’s reduction in sexual partners. The study reports that at baseline, 34.2% of men (95% CI, 32.8%–35.7%) reported multiple partnerships in the past year, 11.9% (10.9%–12.9%) reported nonmarital concurrency, and 4.6% (4.0%–5.3%) reported polygyny. Among women, 4.6% (4.1%–5.2%) reported multiple partnerships, and 1.8% (1.5%–2.2%) reported concurrency. All of the indicators declined over time, with the relative levels remaining similar (Eaton, *et al*, 2014:564).

I frequently heard stories about mothers making a deliberate decision to allow a capable man to support the child's well-being, only later to be told that he is not the 'real' father. Considering the expenses involved in raising a small baby, there is a probability that the young lover and the elders colluded to let the older man support the child "for now". This suggests that even when fathering is understood as a social act of care rather than a biological act of generation, the status of the father is not certain; things can change.

Player too entertains many sexual partners. One memorable day, Player started offloading his recent encounter with one of his sexual partners. He allowed me to record our conversation:

- P: *Hey Ta Ager ndimphindile futhi lamntana. Imandi laweyi and nayo iyazifela ngam ndiyayibona nje (Hey Ta Ager I did that girl again. She is so nice in bed and I can see she also enjoys me).*
- A: *Tell me more. What happened?*
- P: *She didn't want to go to her boyfriend last night. She is naughty... she realised that my girlfriend is not here and came back. Yonela just disappeared; I don't know where she was last night. Maybe she has a new boyfriend you can never know with these girls. So laweyi (that girl) came here and we were just smoking with the guys. Enye yezizibhanxa zam (one of my stupid friends) brought a bottle of Jack Daniels and we drank it. After 11:00pm I asked them to leave because I wanted to sleep and they all left. Leweyi just pretended to be leaving with them but a few minutes later she knocked on my door and told me that she wanted to sleep here. Rhaa! Ta Ager andinomyeka ezizele kum (Dam! Ta Ager I could not let her go, she is the one who came to me) I gave her what she wanted. I was also honey; you know these drugs we use go down there (pointing to his private part).*
- A: *Did Yonela not come back that night?*
- P: *Even if she had come back we were not going to open that door. She would have either gone back to where she was or had to knock in the main house but I know my mother would not have opened for her... lamntu wayesendodeni mani Ta Ager (She was with a man Ta Ager I know that)*
- A: *Did you guys use a condom?*
- P: *Ta Ager uzawube ufuna icondom umntu elapha wena? (Ta Ager would you be searching for condoms when a girl is here?). Hayi Ta Aija sudlal'apha. (No Ta Ager don't play here) (Field notes, 18 August 2012).*

In an earlier conversation with Yonela, she told me that,

*I have three children and their father's family is helping me to provide for these two because my mother (a school teacher) is taking care of my first daughter but when I meet a man maybe we were smoking together or having a drink sometimes I realise that it is too late to go home so I sleep over and sex just happens. We don't have to be in a relationship, he is giving me a place to sleep and his girlfriend is not there so why not? There are plenty girls out there for men to fish so if he avails himself to me why not... because I know my boyfriend is doing the same thing (Interview, 12 May 2012).*

Player, like other men in the research group, does not seem to have managed the transition from boyhood to manhood despite his initiation. This suggests that successful transitions are bolstered by the presence of those who act as positive role models; something markedly absent in these men's lives.<sup>138</sup>

The third case I selected is that of Zoleka (33), Siyabulela's sister. She is the mother of a 10 year old boy, Lukhanyo. In an interview she told me the circumstances that led to her pregnancy. Her story is chosen so that we get a sense of what this 'game' means from a female perspective.

*I don't like being stuck with one man because I like having fun, to go out and drink. Drinking, smoking and sex make me forget about my problems. If I have one man who always expect me to be at his place when he comes back from work... wow yhu hayi (no) not for me. I told you my story about how I had my son... I only seduced that boy and he fell for me. He is good looking but I did not want to have a long term affair with him. All I wanted was to have a beautiful child from a handsome man and that's what I got.<sup>139</sup> We slept and that was it for me. He wanted more but I told him to leave me alone and never visit me at home. It is all about having fun Andile especially when you are drunk because I went to a party there in Khayelitsha and that's where I met that guy. I don't want him and his family near my child and he knows that... That time I was a lesbian but Nomonde (Zoleka's mother) kept pressurising me to have a child. She was so desperate to have a grandchild from me. I think she thought maybe I was barren so I just did what I did to satisfy her but now I am in love with my son. Andiyifuni lakaka yendoda (I don't want that rubbish of a man) near my son (Interview, 3 Dec 2012).*

She allowed herself to fall pregnant for what she described as "social reasons" and not because she was ready to be a parent or desirous of a child. Her mother wanted a grandchild from her in part to avoid her daughter being labelled in the community as *idlolo/ akazali* (barren) or lesbian.

Zoleka does not allow Lukhanyo's father or his father's family to see the child; their last encounter with the boy was in 2011. The child's father voluntarily paid her family R2000 and was interested in pursuing a steadier relationship, including offering to pay more so that he could have access to his son but she refused, arguing that was never a 'relationship' between them but merely a one night stand. Given that many children in South Africa grow up without knowing their fathers or without a present father figure, it is likely that a court would rule in his favour. In fact, the South African constitution on natural children born out of wedlock signed in 1997 states that, "A court may on application by the natural father of a child born out of wedlock make an order granting

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<sup>138</sup> Indeed, in this group of men there is a great deal of avoidance. We have already seen this in relation to their relationships with their fathers. Another place in which it materialises, as I described in relation to Sizwe's case in chapter five, is that they do not want to think or talk about disease. It seems lack of knowing the truth about their HIV status in particular gives them comfort because none of them know their status.

<sup>139</sup> Her pregnancy was well-planned. Before attending the party she says she went to see a doctor and got confirmation that she was ready for conception.

the natural father access rights to or custody or guardianship of the child on the conditions determined by the court” (1997:4). However, the emphasis by the state on prior relationship between natural parents complicates this matter. Zoleka is adamant that they were not in a relationship. Lukhanyo has been supported since birth mainly by Nomonde, his own government child support grant (CSG), and on rare occasions Zoleka gets money from her boyfriends to buy new clothes for him. She briefly had a teaching job in one of the pre-schools but was dismissed after 2 months. It is therefore not surprising as to why most children from poor families also remain poor in their lives. Positive parental guidance and limited opportunities from their parents’ social networks become barriers.

Nomonde, Zoleka’s mother, is unhappy but seems not to have the power to change her mind on the matter despite the fact that Zoleka’s actions indicate an element of disrespect for the elder in the house. Although she is what South Africans generally call ‘the biological mother’, in the past and to some extent in the present, as we have already seen, elders had full say on children born out of wedlock. Here we see intergenerational conflict on how a child should be raised and who is allowed to take part in that process. Zoleka’s behaviour, similar to that of her brother Siyabulela, shows a household where the single parent has lost control over her children.<sup>140</sup>

The point here is that these sexual games in the end put children in precarious social situations, including denial of access to their fathers. The child’s paternity might remain in question or is never fully determined and therefore denying the child an opportunity to bond and establish a relationship with his father and father’s family, hence enabling the child to have rituals performed for him and access to his father’s resources. The child’s right to know his biological father is disregarded, putting ‘rights’ and ‘culture’ on a collision course. Part of the problem in these narratives, emanate from the failures of social institutions like the family, religion and the state to provide a safety net to young people especially when they drop-out of school in this ruthless urban environment.

I argue in this chapter that, being *udlalani* that rests on performing a particular masculine identity. It produces status in a context in which there are limited

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<sup>140</sup> All is expected from her is to provide food and clothes through her grant money. Siyabulela has beaten his mother and I did not see any kin members who came to discuss the issue and possible punish Siyabulela.



opportunities for such. For a woman to be labelled as *isifebe* or *unontyintyi*<sup>141</sup> is an embarrassment not only to her image but to her children and family as well. Such a girlfriend degrades her boyfriend's social status in his community; he is looked down by associating himself with *ikati* (a cat). A typical example in this study is Sizwe. He gets frustrated whenever Minazana disappears to her boyfriends' nearby. In our conversation one afternoon he seemed helpless, telling me that,

*It has been two weeks now we have not seen her here (at home) but people see her in that street. I know she is there and everyone here (at home) knows that she is with that guy. She is embarrassing me to my family and friends now... the worse thing ndiyayazi lekaka yentwana (I know this rubbish of a person). If it was not for my children I would chase her away I cannot live with someone like this. How can you marry someone like that? (Field notes, 14 Oct 2012).*

Here Sizwe acknowledges Ayanda as his. On this occasion it gave him pride being a father of more than one child, just like it must have felt for his own father to have as many children as he had. Minazana's actions are embarrassing for him but she complains that he does not satisfy her needs.

I am suggesting here that in a context in which young men's access to valued roles and statuses is limited, certain performances of masculinity take precedence. Silberschmidt's (2001:657) work in Kenya also reveal that socioeconomic changes in the rural and urban areas has increasingly systematically disempowered men resulting in men's lack of social value and self-esteem. The research shows that high levels of unemployment and failure to fulfil social roles and expectations, male identity and self-esteem have become increasingly linked to sexuality and sexual manifestations (Silberschmidt, 2001:657). Because young men are disempowered economically, they have to find alternative ways to cope with their alienation from the mainstream social life. Often they resort to crime, violence over women and sex. Due to frustration as a result of not having the authority men used to enjoy in the household, they now resort to casual sex with multiple partners and use of violence to prove their masculinity. Her findings are resonate with mine in Gugulethu with almost every man in the study having multiple casual sex with different women. Sizwe is the only exception. He is afraid to approach women (not least in case they learn that he is not initiated); hence his girlfriend

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<sup>141</sup> Female alcoholic. The term *nontyintyi* does not apply to men. An alcoholic man is called *inxila* in Xhosa and *isidakwa* in Zulu

calls him *isishumane* (a man who is scared of females). The irony is that he is “faithful” and conforms to an ideal of marriage even though not in one.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, this is a group of young people, both men and women, trying to find their way in an environment that has given up on them. The living arrangements and circumstances in an urban settlement such as Gugulethu show that the family cannot act as a safety net to the extent it did in the past (Reynolds, 1984:23). The isolation of families from their kin members makes it difficult to provide support to children.

The young men with whom I worked live life from the outside the mainstream. They have developed their own communities, gang groups, as a form of self-preservation, and have developed models of masculinity that valorise drug use, criminal involvement and womanising. Sadly, they also serve to undercut the relationships that might secure their access to their children and provide positive role models to the next generation.

## Chapter Seven

### Fathering under duress: responsibility and its limits

In Chapters One and Three I outlined the central argument of the attachment theory, sometimes referred to as the theory of bonding, as first proposed by Bowlby (1969) and later developed by his associates. This theory is premised on the assertion that optimal emotional and cognitive development is based on a child's inborn need to bond with one main person, initially anticipated to be the biological mother. The approach had been adapted and put to effective use in South Africa, where a group of psychologists working in Khayelitsha, a peri-urban settlement nearby Gugulethu in its location, report that

Extensive research over the past three decades has shown that when infants experience reliable care that is sensitive to their developmental needs over the first year or so of life, they are likely to develop a secure attachment to their principal carer, usually their mother, and that this security of attachment endures through to adulthood. In turn, security in the infant's key attachment relationship is associated with better outcomes in several domains of development, in both the short term and the longer term. In early and middle childhood, the benefits of a secure attachment are principally shown in good peer relationships and socio-emotional adjustment; in adulthood, associations are consistently found with lower rates of mental health problems (Cooper, *et al*, 2009:1).

This approach, while it recognises 'principal carers' rather than solely mothers, tends to overemphasise the maternal social relationship to the extent that fathers<sup>142</sup> and other household members who also provide care for young children scarcely feature. In most African household settings, child care is provided by a variety of people; as Mkhize puts it, "...child-rearing is the collective responsibility of [both parents and] the extended family as a whole" (Mkhize, 2006:187). I therefore am cautious in adopting attachment theory uncritically. I am rather more interested in its social dimensions; particularly the crucial role that people believe African fathers ought to play in order to connect their children to their lineages. I propose to broaden the understanding and application of attachment theory by suggesting that the role African men play in their children's lives is potentially vital both in terms of caring and in terms of broader social and especially the ritual relations deemed critical to individual and social well-being. I argue for a concept

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<sup>142</sup> Personal conversations with Mark Tomlinson, one of the psychologists working in these neighbourhoods, point to the difficult task of trying to establish the whereabouts of the men involved or fathered the children they work with.

of ‘social attachment’ which recognises the roles African fathers play in effectively enabling their children to develop clear cultural identities and the practices these enable.

As I showed in Chapter Five, the lack of *isiduko* (clan name) for a man like Ta Pat both creates confusion about one’s identity and also that of his children. Rituals are an important stage in welcoming young children in black families because it is widely believed that a young child needs to be introduced to the ancestors for protection and incorporated into the social relations and structures that characterise desired forms of social life and relationship. However, among the families I worked with, these and other rituals remain an ideal unrealised. Lack of resources is often cited as an obstacle. For instance, Hunter (2006:99) talks about men’s lack of power particularly their inability to pay *ilobolo* and build their own *imizi* (homesteads). He explores how high unemployment and low marriage rates shape contemporary understandings and meanings of fatherhood and fathering (ibid). He argues, and I have shown earlier, that in South Africa today there is a prevalent disjuncture where it is relatively easy for most poor men to impregnate women, yet they are often unable to fulfil their social fathering roles (ibid). He asserts “that this fissure... provides an important entry point for understanding the contradictory contours of male power [or lack thereof] in post-apartheid South Africa” (ibid).

In this chapter I draw on this model to explain my informants’ current circumstances and how those are affected by the post-apartheid political-economy. I do so to challenge media stereotypes that portray African men as irresponsible, impregnating women and then denying paternity (Hunter, 2006:99). This view of men is not constrained to the media; it is a commonplace in South African conversations about the need for ‘moral regeneration’. Many women I know considered the men I worked with to be irresponsible. However, most of our conversations reveal that even though these men accept that their children are *ngabantwana bempazamo* (children of a mistake), in general these men do not deny paternity, although they do not always take the forms of responsibility that are socially sanctioned such as providing resources for children. Where paternity has been under scrutiny, men offer what they consider to be valid grounds to question their role in it. I show in this chapter that paternity has great social status and men are proud to be fathers even though they might not always support the well-being of their children.

The meaning of fathering children in black communities is deeply rooted in people's cultures. For instance among the Zulu people Hunter (2006:99) reminds us that "in the pre-colonial and early colonial era, the building of a successful home required men to control a large amount of agricultural labour. Men who fathered the most children tended to become the most respected households heads." Furthermore, as I have shown in Sizwe's case, (see Chapter Five) and as Hunter argues, "fathering a child symbolises sexual virility and propels forward the status of a young man" (2006:104). In other words, when a man dies his legacy lives on.

As shown in the literature review in Kenya and Tanzania African men are largely unemployed and therefore frustrated because they have no power (Silberschmidt, 2001:658). This pattern is widespread in Africa (see Honwana: 2012). I have shown in this thesis that most of my informants depend on their mothers for the very basic things in life such as food, shelter, 'pocket money' which in turn undermines their social status as men within households. "We know that patriarchal system resides precisely in the fact that male authority requires a material base while male responsibility is culturally and normatively constituted" (Silberschmidt, 2001:657). Yet, socioeconomic changes over time, and the shift in the gendering of the labour force "...weaken the material base of male authority" (ibid). The failure to move beyond stereotypical labels which are largely based on racial differences, and begin to investigate<sup>143</sup> and analyse the impact these socioeconomic changes have in men's lives, limit our understanding these structural factors have on men's behaviour.

Both young and older generations in Gugulethu are in agreement that men's failure to perform their social attachment roles as outlined above for their children means that their children *basesichengeni* (are "left exposed") and vulnerable to enemies because ancestors have not been formally invited to protect them. There is a strong believe in Nguni societies that small babies need to be protected against witchcraft and other evil spirits and ancestors are best placed to perform this protection. A child would sometimes be taken for *ukuqiniswa* (protection) to a traditional healer<sup>144</sup> who performs

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<sup>143</sup> I believe that with a deeper understanding of these changes, we will be in a better position to begin to explain for instance xenophobic attacks on other black foreign nationals by fellow South Africans in the townships. Attackers accused them of 'stealing our women and our jobs'.

<sup>144</sup> In recent years though *abathandazeli* (prophets) are preferred by some families to perform protection through prayers and sometimes the use of *iintambo* (wool belts usually tied on one's waste, wrists and around the neck) over traditional healers. This is different from the belts used by traditional healers to assist babies with teething where a pig poo and other traditional medicines are used.

*iintlanga* (small scarifications) where traditional medicine is applied in all major joints such as wrists, arms, legs, neck and heard. As we saw in Ta Pat's case, the failure to incorporate him into either the maternal or paternal line has rendered him open to accusations of being *udingezweni* (the one who wonders around) with no kin connections or clear and recognised identity. This then raises important questions regarding responsibility and role of fathers within households.

Research on responsible fathering regained interest among anthropologists when James Levine and Edward Pitt (1995) proposed that the long-term goal of equal opportunity for women in American society would never be achieved without serious and meaningful recognition of the significance, interest, and responsibility of fathers in children's lives. In their subsequent work James Levine and Edward Pitt (1995:5-6) identified four key elements in defining responsible fathering. They argued that a man who behaves responsibly towards his child does the following; (a) he waits to make a baby until he is prepared emotionally and financially to support his child; (b) he establishes his legal paternity if and when he does make a baby; (c) he actively shares with the child's mother in the continuing emotional and physical care of their child, from pregnancy onwards; (d) and lastly, he shares with the child's mother in the continuing financial support of their child, from pregnancy onwards. The four key elements, although formulated within a specific cultural context, are useful in thinking about the ways my informants either perform or avoid their own responsibilities. I find their definition encompassing in that it recognises fathers' responsibilities in both resident and non-resident unions, thus taking into account their diverse situations (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erikson, 1998:279). However, most of the men with whom I worked in Gugulethu barely meet the terms of this definition. For instance, many of them describe their children as *abantwana bempazamo* (children of a mistake – unplanned children) and sometimes exonerate themselves from any responsibilities that might link them to such children. Interestingly though they do not deny paternity because having a child, as mentioned above, boosts their social status as men.

Levine and Doherty's propositions have been taken up by governments and civil society in various parts of the world to encourage responsible fathering. In the United States for instance, The Children's Bureau adopted the notion of promoting responsible fathering as proposed by Doherty, Kouneski, & Erikson (1998) and this led to the establishment of Fatherhood Initiative (FI). The initiative has received great appreciation

from policy makers since 2000. Sheldon (2009) reports that the FI has been very useful in generating discussions about how to engage unmarried non-resident fathers in the parenting process so that they can see the value their presence will add in the child's life. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) support the promotion of responsible fathering and maintains that fathers' involvement in parenting will increase children's resiliency to deal with trauma, crime, and poverty issues (Trahan & Cheung, 2012). To support such initiatives, the U.S government developed 'Responsible Fatherhood Grants', allocating

\$150 million in each of five years for healthy marriage promotion and responsible fatherhood. Each year, \$75 million may be used for activities promoting fatherhood, such as counselling, mentoring, marriage education, enhancing relationship skills, parenting, and activities to foster economic stability (Trahan & Cheung, 2012:1-2).<sup>145</sup>

Furthermore, similar initiatives have gathered momentum in Africa as well. The African Fathers Initiative (AFI) is a continent-wide movement for the generation, collection, and dissemination of knowledge and skills about fatherhood in Africa (<http://www.africanfathers.org.zw/>). In South Africa, Sonke Gender Justice run a project called "My Dad Can", which focuses on the engagement of fathers in the lives of their children and families (<http://www.genderjustice.org.za/en/>). The project aims to encourage and celebrate fathers 'who care' by profiling them in local media. The two initiatives, African Fathers and Sonke Gender Justice in conjunction with Instituto Promundo of Brazil, the South African National Department of Social Development and MenEngage launched a project called Men Care in early August 2011. The project seeks to engage men to improve maternal health and birthing outcomes of children as a way of involving men in parenting roles and the developmental outcomes of their children (<http://www.africanfathers.org.zw/>).

However, these initiatives are invisible in townships like Gugulethu. As such, academics and researchers are seeking new ways to empower parents. A recent seminar (Feb, 2015) on parenting organised by the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town emphasised the urgent need for parenting programmes especially in poor communities. The speakers grappled with questions of selection: Who do you target in

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<sup>145</sup> There is something profoundly problematic in this because, after all, it is the American state that disproportionately incarcerates young black men. Certain ethnic groups continue to be lagging behind and generation after generation they get involved in criminal activities. It seems the parenting skills offered by initiatives like the FI fail to address the real structural inequalities which lead to violent behaviour.

those programmes? How long do you continue working or training parents once you identify them? Any parenting approach will have to be mindful of the fact that, “although Black fathers in South Africa and the US are stereotyped as uninvolved fathers who cannot financially support their children, the everyday lived experiences of men in families suggest a more complicated reality” (Madhavan & Roy, 2012:11). Drawing on my ethnographic material I have shown these everyday challenges young parents have to overcome and the ways that men’s strategies to accomplish power and status have contradictory effects.

In fact, the young are now challenging long standing traditional practices in order to convince older generations to acknowledge their social suffering which is characterised by poverty, unemployment, violence, HIV/Aids and which young people attempt to offset by regular use of drugs. Their challenge to tradition may be read as an attempt not to die a silent death without a fight. We have already seen in the thesis that most of these men are depicted by their girlfriends and relatives as *amadoda efe ethwele iminqwazi*<sup>146</sup> (men who die with their hats on) when it comes to meeting the needs of their children. Their failure is also exaggerated by the fact that even when they have money most of it goes to drugs and alcohol. Specifically, the young people I worked with in Gugulethu, both men and women, challenge traditional practices and suggest that there should be reviews in practices such as *lobola* (bride wealth) and *intlawulo* because they are unable to meet these requirements but they do want to support their children. I take up this issue later in this chapter because it is an important theme considering that 10 of the 12 men in my project are not married to the mothers of their children and therefore they are directly affected by *intlawulo*. I argue in this chapter therefore that, the challenges posed to people by urban conditions in the townships forces them to rethink traditional ways of interacting and building familial relationships.

Anthropologists have long shown that in Africa the negative consequences of being “...born out of wedlock are far less than in Western European society” (Burman & Preston-Whyte, 1992: xiii). This is because in Africa “...the child of an unmarried woman is incorporated into the line of the mother’s father and her guardian automatically cares for and assumes guardianship of her child. Unlike the stereotypical

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<sup>146</sup> This is an old idiom in Xhosa that describe a man who is only a man because he wears trousers and not because of his actions. Usually such men are provided for either by their parents, brothers or even their wives. It is an insult to any man to be viewed in this manner and the symbolism of a hat in his head means he is so lazy to even take it off.



'bastard' of European society, the child is thus provided with both kin and a recognised place in society" (ibid). However, as I have just indicated above that with the current generation, even within Nguni societies this is not always the case especially in urban settings with limited resources.

Finally, one cannot write about fathering responsibility in this urban context without commenting on gender differential considerations when it comes to care for children because this aspect of child responsibility varies from culture to culture. In Gugulethu, gender differences informed by culture dictate what role men and women play in terms of providing physical care to the young. I report in this chapter that, at times men exempt themselves from certain tasks relating to child care citing culture as a point of reference of what is appropriate for their masculinity in this regard.

### **Establishing paternity and the meaning of responsibility**

It has been fascinating throughout my field work to witness household processes with regards to decision making particularly where a child's future had to be taken. I was especially intrigued by what appeared to be a deliberate avoidance to resolve Minazana's second son's paternity debacle. In chapter five I explained the traditional custom in which families might draw on elders' wisdom to establish a child's paternity without having to rely on modern expensive use of technology which involves the actual testing of blood. The advantage of this process is the fact that it is free, no money is charged and the child's future is secured. Without a doubt this is a huge responsibility bestowed on elderly women<sup>147</sup> to decide the future of the child. The 'selection' of an employed man to be the father to this child (in a case which involved Mabhanti) confirms the fact that fatherhood in Nguni societies is a status bestowed to those who can care and take responsibility for the needs of the child. Thus in selecting an older, employed man as father, the elders are securing the child's future as best they can. In the present case, Sizwe and his family simply did not address the matter of the child's questionable paternal identity. The failure to deal with this dilemma has not helped because even though on occasion, as we have seen, Sizwe accepts paternity, the child and his mother

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<sup>147</sup> The process of *ukufaniswa kosana* does not involve men. It involves undressing the infant and looking for specific signs such as birth marks, shapes of ears, nose, lips, head and so forth. The elderly women who perform this function must know few generations of the man's lineage for them to be able to identify such markers and this explains why it has to be performed by elderly women.

remain open insults within the household and is sometimes the cause of fights between Sizwe and Minazana and other kin members.

Undoubtedly, as long as the issue remains unaddressed, it will continue to compromise the status of the child within the household.

Ayanda, the child in question, was born on 25 December 2010, and since then his mother, Minazana, has been the subject of public humiliation from everyone in the household due to her known infidelities. She is called *isifebe* (a loose woman), *ibule* (whore), *injakaŋi* (a female dog). All these are highly offensive names but oddly she refused to leave Sizwe. In chapter five I suggested that she tolerated bad treatment because Sizwe's home offers a place of security to her; somewhere that someone else will provide food, she has shelter, and drugs are easily accessible daily. Beyond this, her story tells us something about the meaning and importance for young women to be regarded as living with the child's father. Both Mams and Sizwe do talk about the possibility of making her *umakoti* (a newly married woman), even though it is hard to imagine this happening in reality. Minazana's cousin, Lungiswa, consider Minazana a lucky woman because she lives with her child's father in a brick flat. *Indlu yesitena*<sup>148</sup> (brick house) has a high social value in this community especially to young women because most of them live in *bokkies* in informal areas.

My interest in this story was further provoked by the fact that the child is already excluded from Sizwe's ancestral rituals which were performed for Ayanda's elder brother, Njabu. It needs no further justification to show that Ayanda is not accepted into Sizwe's lineage. If Minazana was married to Sizwe, Ayanda would be identified as *umqgakhwe*<sup>149</sup> (a child of a married woman but from a different father). However, she is not married, merely cohabiting with him. In cases like this, as Jones (1992:249) explains, in African society there is no direct term for what we know as an illegitimate child. Hence, he argues, we must "...remain alert to the semantic pitfalls which belie the process of cross-cultural description" (ibid). Unlike in the past where children such as Ayanda would automatically get incorporated into the mother's father's lineage, now

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<sup>148</sup> Although Minazana's family did not receive any compensation from Sizwe's family for her pregnancy but she occupies a position many young women out there could only dream of. She knows that should she leave Sizwe, another woman would easily express interest to Sizwe because it is no longer considered an embarrassment for a woman to propose love to a man in this community.

<sup>149</sup> In Xhosa there is no equivalent term for *umqgakhwe* in English.

things are changing. Minazana is on her own now in Cape Town because her father retired and has gone to live in his village in the Eastern Cape. She maintains very little contact with her brother and sister because they want her to go and live in their father's shack in Khayelitsha, something she refuses to do. Between 2011 and 2013 she only met her daughter once in Khayelitsha. Like Ta Pat, Ayanda seems to be heading the same direction as *udingezwani*.

Watching Ayanda's situation unfold on a regular basis prompted me to ask individual members involved in it who they thought should take the lead in resolving the matter or at least bring everyone involved to talk about it. In an interview with Mams, I asked her about this child's situation within the family:

- A: *Mams it seems everyone here believes that he is not Sizwe's child?*
- M: *Hey Andile this thing worries me because Ayanda is growing and soon he will know about this because ababantwana (these children – Sizwe and Minazana) always bayathukana (insult) each other about it. I don't know what is going to happen*
- A: *I've heard you also not believe that he is your grandchild*
- M: *Look at him Andile he does not look like Njabu... you know this girl has been sleeping around that is why I don't think he is my grandchild, I don't think he is part of this family*
- A: *Have you spoken to his parents about it and your feelings on it?*
- M: *We don't speak about it. It only comes up when they fight so I don't think I should interfere kuzawuphinde kuthwe nanko umntu omdala engena izinto zabantwana (neighbours/observers will say there she goes again, interfering in young people's affairs)*
- A: *You say this thing worries you ucinga ukuba ngubani omele athathe ixanduva lokusombulula lemeko okanye nook ambuze uMinazana ngoyena yise womntana? (Who do you think should take responsibility to resolve it or at least ask Minazana about the real father?)*
- M: *They must both resolve it; this girl must come clean about it... I saw him the first day she came back from hospital after giving birth. This thing Andile is complicated because I also asked Sizwe's sisters and they all agreed with me. I think Sizwe had a fight with Beauty when she (Beauty) started insulting him about raising another man's child and since then it became open (Interview, 27 Feb 2013).*

One of the key elements in Levine and Pitt's (1995) definition of fathering is the need for a man to establish legal paternity when he makes a baby. As I have described that in this case no blood test or the Xhosa traditional way of identifying a child – *ukufaniswa* - had been conducted. However, Sizwe together with his family reject this boy despite his on-going relationship with Ayanda's mother. On what grounds then does he reject paternity? I have argued in chapter 5 that the men in my study refuse to take responsibility even where it is known or evident that they made a mistake.

Under normal conditions, an issue such as this would be handled with great care by elders so as to protect the child from humiliation and indeed make them feel as part of the family. Preston-Whyte (1992:233) argues that in all African societies, children are highly valued. The fact that even a child of an unmarried woman was given recognition through incorporation into the mother's father's lineage is an indication of the value accorded to all children in black communities. In her earlier work, Preston-Whyte (1978) remarked that for an unmarried woman, the aspiration to have her own child was something critical that preoccupied every female. Children also served another purpose within households.

In black communities grandparents are much more valued for their wisdom, and often given similar social status Africans give to ancestors. Grandparents contribute much in raising and teaching the younger generation, and especially now in a context shaped by HIV-AIDS, which has reshaped the grandparental role significantly. With regard to the importance placed on children in black communities, Preston-Whyte (1992:233) remark that in most African communities "there is a sense in which the value placed upon children is so high for many people that marriage is, in some contexts, quite irrelevant to the bearing of a child." It is therefore surprising to find families where children are being punished for the deeds of their mothers. The treatment given to Ayanda is indicative of the death of the old adage that says *umntana wakho ngowam, owam ngowakho* (your child is mine, and my child is yours) and it points to the impact black families in urban environment have to overcome. The safety of children even within households is no longer guaranteed.

A child in Ayanda's situation is called in Xhosa *ilable - singula* ("coal": in this context the term refers to a man who is raising a child whose biological father is either in question or known to some including the child's mother). Men who care for an *ilable* get two kinds of reactions from his friends and community. Some sympathise with him but no one would easily volunteer to tell him. Others would laugh at him, considering him a useless man who is being 'played' by his woman. Sizwe's sisters humiliate him as a weak man, further degrading his status as a man in the household. Minazana does not feel the need to account to his family for her actions. In our conversation on this issue she once said, *I am not married here so I can do whatever I want to do with my life* (Field notes, 22 Oct 2012). Her fearless character sometimes portrays her as *umntana ongenambeko* (a child that lacks respect) because she talks back when she is humiliated or questioned about her

whereabouts. Sizwe's sisters regard her disrespect as his failing, casting further doubt on his masculinity.

In my quest to understand how families and men themselves feel and respond to such an issue in their lives, I asked similar questions to Sizwe as the man at the centre of this dilemma.

- A: *Ta Tsi (his nick name) I have been hearing about Ayanda's situation for quite some time now I want your views and feelings on this matter. Is he your son?*
- S: *ybooo Ta Ager here we go... what can I say...*
- A: *I've heard you many times when you guys fight that you don't think Ayanda is your child*
- S: *Ta Ager you can see he does not look like anyone in my family. For now I am just ignoring this issue but I know if she decide to leave me, Njabu will stay behind and she will leave with this one. Njabu belongs here*
- A: *Do you think it's the best way to ignore it when it clearly hurts you because when you guys fight you always bring it up?*
- S: *Ta Ager my responsibility is to look after my son Njabu. I don't care about her son*
- A: *As a man in this house is it not your responsibility to get to the bottom of this problem in your relationship?*
- S: *When I try to talk to her about it she starts swearing at me so I just give up. I cannot force her to tell me who the father is but she knows that I don't think I am his (Ayanda) father (Interview, 1 March 2013).*

I also spoke to Minazana about this matter as well. In our interview she downplays the importance and seriousness of this issue. I was surprised by her willingness to continue tolerating their insults and name calling.

- M: *They can talk whatever they want to see they have no proof that he is not the father. It is none of their business that I have other boyfriends the fact remains I stay here and I sleep with Sizwe.*
- A: *What do you think of the neighbours when they shout and insult you about it though?*
- M: *I don't care about them too. Their children are not perfect too.*
- A: *How do you think this matter should be resolved?*
- M: *They are the ones accusing me so they must prove that he is not the father. If they want paternity they will need my permission*
- A: *Would you give them permission to go ahead?*
- M: *It will depend on how I feel about this thing on that day. Andile, I don't care about these people and I am not scared of them. If they don't want me here they must throw me out. I gave them grandchildren. Their son [Sizwe] was 36 [when I first met him] without a child and now they talk all this nonsense. Why are they not [asking] questions about Njabu? [if he is the*

*father to him too]. Look Ta Ager these people are supporting Ayanda, they buy food and clothes for him so why should I worry myself about it*

*A: So if they were not doing those things for him, what would you have done?*

*M: my family would support my child. I would have long gone with both my children because if they want me out of here I will not leave Njabu behind they didn't pay for him<sup>150</sup>, I will take him too. I know they all love him but I can't leave my child here (Interview, 3 March 2013).*

As I have suggested earlier, Minazana is knows what matters to Sizwe and his family – a child - and therefore this becomes a power game. She realised that she did not have much choice; her family is dispersed and connections are shallow. The avoidance to confront this issue not only denies the child an opportunity to have an involved father in his life but also shows that such matters are never easy to deal with when so much is at stake.

### ***Umntana wempazamo* ('child of a mistake') versus responsibility**

As I've shown, several of the fathers in this study describe their children as *abantwana bempazamo* (plural - 'children of a mistake'). In labelling these children /pregnancies as *abamntana bempazamo*, men discharge themselves from the duties associated with that child. The men shift the blame to the child's mother for failing to prevent pregnancy. None ever blamed themselves for not using condoms or even asking the girlfriend if she was on contraceptives. The children I am referring to in this sub-section are not those from the casual sexual games I have already described but from what men considered their main intimate relationships. It was clear in our conversations that by labelling these pregnancies as 'mistake', men do consider themselves responsible to meet the needs of the child. In both individual interviews and in group discussions, men put the blame on their girlfriends for not using contraceptives. In this interview, Asanda gives an idea of how most of them feel about these pregnancies:

*A: I thought she was preventing [using contraceptives]... I just assumed because she was still at school so for I told myself she is safe. We never talked about it really... I just assumed she was preventing. When she broke the news that she is pregnant it came to me as a shock... she first said she missed her periods for the second month. I was like what? But Joe<sup>151</sup> didn't you go to the clinic to prevent?*

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<sup>150</sup> His *imbeleko* was partially done by Mams and nothing has been paid to Minazana's family.

<sup>151</sup> This is a way of calling/getting the attention of another person. It is usually used by men when they call/address their friends but often now is used to get the attention of a female as well. Being called Joe shows that one is youthful and understanding township life style.

- AM: *So you were not using condoms?*
- A: *Hey Ta Ace you can't use condoms with your girlfriend*
- AM: *Ok I hear you... but I am interested to know why you can't use it with your girlfriend?*
- A: *No man she is my girlfriend. We never talked about using condoms anyway, its not the same Ta Ace and you know it uyandisokolisa nje ngoku (you are just making my life difficult now). If you bring up the condom issue she will ask me if I have another girlfriend and we will start fighting because she has caught me with another girl before*
- AM: *So you never asked her about going to the clinic for prevention?*
- A: *No its her business. She was in standard 8 that time so she should have known that falling pregnant would delay her in school. Hey it was a big shock to me because I had just dropped out of school in standard 7 and my mother was still angry at me, I was afraid of her*
- AM: *You were worried about your mother. So whose responsibility is it to raise Anitha now since you didn't plan for her?*
- A: *Obviously its our responsibility as her parents*
- AM: *How much is your own contribution so far?*
- A: *Hey that is difficult because she is not staying here as you know. I would say her mother is doing most of the work, I mean she broke up with me she must deal with it. I see Anitha in some weekends*
- AM: *If she didn't break up with you how were you going to contribute?*
- A: *I think if we were still together things would have been different... if I get something we would use it together. You know Ta Ace ndiyadidiza endaweni zam (I do make plans in my places) (Interview, 6 March 2012).*

His views, like those of other men in this study, point to a very important role fathers in this community are expected to play for their children and that is to attach their children into their own lineages. The failure to perform such ritual customs was always blamed on lack of resources but for me this lack of interest is also vital. The positive aspect in Asanda's response to the pregnancy though is that, despite the fear he had about his mother's reaction, he said he never thought about denying paternity. But, accepting paternity is only part of what is expected from a man towards his child. A father must pay compensation to the woman's family and incorporate the child into his own lineage, support the child and act as a guide. Most of the men in this study did not meet these cultural expectations.

When asked what role, if any, Asanda played in assisting his girlfriend in breaking the pregnancy news to her family he said, *Well there is nothing I could have done because at that stage we started fighting a lot so she dealt with her family alone (Interview, 6 March 2012).* This is not only indicative of what many see as his arrogance, but also shows that young school age

girls are left alone to take responsibility in dealing with their angry parents (see Mkhize, 2006). Often such pregnancies are only discovered by elders when ‘the stomach shows’ because young girl hide it in fear of their parents. (This is one partial explanation for why many young pregnant women report late at the clinics for their routine check-ups.)

Asanda never afforded me the opportunity to see his ex-girlfriend so that I could learn from her how she dealt with her family’s reaction to the pregnancy.

Additionally, in our conversation about responsibility he said,

*A: I think I am a responsible father because I share what I have with my daughter unlike most men here who behave as if they are not parents. I know I am not perfect but I try my best. If I don't have money I ask my mother and she helps me a lot with her.*

*AM: What does it mean to be a responsible father?*

*A: Yho! For me is to make sure my daughter has food, I give her money if she is sick for a doctor, and also akablelelekanga kwabanyabantwana ngasezimpahleni (she is not looking disadvantaged in terms of clothing when compared to other children) no I can't be responsible for her [the child's mother]... she left me. Whoever she is now involved with will take care of her.*

*AM: What do you think your drug use and being in and out of prison will do to your daughter or how do you think she will feel when she is old about it?*

*A: Hey you see that one is not something I am proud of but that is life here. We don't have anything to do so you end up being naughty. I don't think she will be proud of me. I do feel like I am letting her down and also my mother because she does not like what I am doing (Interview, 6 March 2012).*

When responding to the question about responsibility, the men always understood it in terms of being a *provider* for one’s child. Most of my informants do not meet the key elements of a responsible father according to the definition suggested by Levine and Pitt (1995). As indicated above, many of the men were not prepared for their children’s arrival, both emotionally and financially. Even though a man like Asanda was able to adjust himself and learn to accept and love her daughter once she was born it did not lead to a positive change in his lifestyle. From pregnancy onwards, his girlfriend had to rely on her family for support. It also seems that the fight with his girlfriend when she was pregnant helped him to play a more passive role. He does worry that Anitha’s mother might influence his daughter against him but takes little action to shift her perspective. Lack of both household and external assistance limits what men are able to invest in their children’s future and shifts the ways that masculinity is performed and



valorised. As Willis (1977) shows, this has the effect of perpetuating cycles of disadvantage.

It is clear therefore that there are many factors that could either hinder or encourage fathers to be more responsible for their children's well-being. Hunter (2006:104) argues that "men draw upon gendered discourses to blame 'promiscuous' women for unexpected pregnancies, and yet there is more than a twinge of culpability when deserting men are labelled as unmanly." Conversations I have had with most of the men suggest that they would like to support their children but their unemployment makes this impossible. Other factors as described in previous chapters include relationships that did not end well, conflict with the woman's family, and their own personal lives which are characterised by drugs and criminal offences. It is also the case that women act as gatekeepers, intentionally or unintentionally disallowing paternal access to the child (Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Hawkins *et al*, 1999). However as I have shown in chapter six, while gatekeeping is sometimes undertaken by mothers, other significant players such as the mother's mother or male siblings may have more power in keeping men from active involvement in their children's lives.

Most of the fathers say they were happy about the news of the arrival of a new born child in their lives, but not at least to the extent that finding a job became a priority. They only remained emotionally excited about the news. Only three fathers, Abna, Abee and Siyabulela, were actively looking for employment when they lost their current jobs. Most of the men in the study were very specific that as men it is their responsibility to support their children but not all felt their support is also important to the child's mother.

Rashidi (27), a father of two children has taken up responsibility for his girlfriend's son from her prior relationship. He plays the roles of *utatomncinci* (younger father). He remains sceptical about incorporating the child into his lineage because he fears that one day when the boy is old enough his real father might appear. In a group discussion other men were very critical of his decision to raise another man's child. Shayela said,

*If my girlfriend had a child I would ask her not to bring that child when she comes to me because one day the father of that child will appear and claim the child. You will regret having wasted your money supporting and feeding that child... you will say hey I should have used that money to support my own child look now... that man is laughing at you saying look at that stupid man he is supporting my child (Group Discussion, 19 July 12).*

*Ntemie: you are right Shayela, look man you are not working and now you have to buy clothes for three children instead of two. I wouldn't do that. Is that boy going to use your clan name or his fathers? If you break up with your girlfriend she might say she used you, you must be careful (Group Discussion, 19 July 12).*

But Rashidi is unpersuaded by their criticisms. He told the group members that,

*If you love someone you cannot separate her with her child. For me when I first met my girlfriend she was open and honest to me about everything so I knew about the child from the beginning (Group Discussion, 19 July 12).*

Many men consider it a waste of a man's money to raise a woman's child from her previous relationship. It is also read as a marker of a weak man. The other men believe that a real man should not accept such demands from a woman. Rashidi's mother also does not approve of her son's decision. She believes that the child's mother might still be in contact with the father. She said, *how can he [Rashidi] be sure that the two children are his? What if this girl is still with that man, because they don't live together [with Rashidi] for a long time. She disappears for a long time here because that sister of hers does not like her to stay here so she goes to Mitchells Plain but I don't want to get involved, it is his decision even if she is playing with him it is his business (Field notes, 19 August 12).*<sup>152</sup>.

In terms of the financial assistance to their girlfriends, men's families play an important part on behalf of their sons. It is generally expected that a father would support his child but when he fails to meet this expectation among the Nguni societies, his father usually assist him. This is done to protect the name of the family but also to enable the child to be part of his/her father's clan. However, as we have seen, when a man's mother performs this role, it reflects badly on him.

Among this group of men, Shayela took this expectation for assistance to another level. He felt his mother should help him out to support his children. As we have seen, many older women play this role. However, Shayela's mother did not do this. Consequently, Shayela chased her out of her own house. His mother has never returned because she is scared of him. He now eats from hand to mouth. Like most other men in the group, he believes that it is his responsibility to raise his children but admits that his

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<sup>152</sup> The question of how and whether men accept children born of prior relationships is important and the presence of children – or of a former lover – may be disguised. Here is an example from my family. My brother married his wife under the impression that the father of her son had died but on the day of their wedding my sisters overheard his newly married wife speaking on the phone behind the main house with the child's father. In fear of what might have happened had they told our brother, my sisters decided not to tell him. He only learnt the true story when his wife's son wanted to visit his father over school holidays.

girlfriend plays the most part in raising their children because she has a stable job and she gets assistance from her family as well.

As argued in chapter 5, the nature of the relationship between the child's father and mother often shapes the probability of him taking responsibility for his child. Where this relationship is not strong, the father turn to be withdrawn and mothers see such fathers as irresponsible. There seems to be some gendered patterning in this, though my sample is too small to make a broad generalisation. Among this group of fathers is that they seem to prefer daughters more than boys. With the exception of Ta Pat where their daughters were sent to live with their maternal grandparents, all other men did not abandon their daughters. Generally, these men believe that boys bring more problems for their fathers; they might join gang groups, impregnate young girls and get involved with wrong friends. They fear their sons might behave like their own fathers. Again, Willis (1977) is useful for thinking about this. He writes (p2) that "class identity is not truly reproduced until it has properly passed through the individual and the group, until it has been recreated in the context of what appears to be personal and collective volition". Since the parents themselves resisted the culture of schooling in preference for streetwise fast life, these men fear that their children, growing up in the same environment they inhabited, will follow the same lifestyle.

### **Re-visiting *intlawulo yesisu* (Compensation for impregnating a woman)**

Once paternity has been acknowledged, the second most important obligation for the father is the commencement of paying *intlawulo yesisu* if the pregnant woman is not married. Meeting this custom is critical because it formalises the relationship between the two families. It is a sign of remorse and respect to the woman's family and this is what the payment intends to achieve apart from contributing towards raising the child. A responsible man would pay or at least make arrangement with the woman's family, a sign that he is taking responsibility for his problems. At the moment especially in urban context, although compensation is traditional, there is no uniformity on the amount to be charged if it is in monetary form or the number of cows. Each family or at least community seems to have a choice in deciding how many to charge.

The purpose and need for this payment came under a lot of criticism from the men in Gugulethu. Some feel that the demand for this money actually prevents them

from making contributions when they have little money because they have not paid for *intlawnulo*. Indeed, being a father and unemployed makes it difficult for young men especially without the families' financial help to meet this expectation. When *intlawnulo* has not been paid it makes it difficult for some men to make small contributions financially, what is popularly known as *amakhaḓi amancinci* (small bride payments) because these do not count towards *intlawnulo* and therefore is considered by some as 'wasted' money.

All men in our group discussions were completely opposed to *intlawnulo*. Instead they preferred to make contributions towards the upkeep of the child. This general feeling is also complicated by confusion over whether payments relate to impregnation or whether a woman who is already a mother (i.e. has a child already with another man) falls out of the category. My informants believed that such a woman *sophulwe ibele* (literally, "her breast has already been broken by another man"). This relates to the social value and status girls have in Nguni society. Girls who are still virgins or who have not yet born children are highly valued and their fathers are excused to charge as many cows as they wish when they get married. An elderly man was specific: he said that you only stop paying if the woman has three or more children because by then she is considered *ijwayela* (beyond marriageable). *Ijwayela* is a very demeaning term. It depicts one as having gone past her prime and no man would be expected to marry her.

Young men's explanation on how *intlawnulo* works seems more like a justification for their failures to perform expected roles. In their everyday conversations, they called for a review of this practice to suit the current situation they find themselves. It seems that both young and old need to find a balance on how to deal with the question of compensation. This is particularly necessary because sometimes even young women who are now mothers that I had conversations with on this matter hold that men should rather contribute to the up-keep of the child. They argue that generally the compensation money is used for matters other than child care. This then begs the question of care, especially its meaning in this community. Conversations around the topic of care for children always sway toward provision rather than being available to protect women and children. As we saw above with the identification of a 'father', priority is given to a man's ability to provide for a child.

## Fathers and the meaning of care for young children

Care practices remain highly gendered. The men in my study perform almost every task for their children. They warm baby bottles, wash baby clothes, feed them, play games, carry them and many other duties. However, these men refuse to do two things for their daughters. It is like a taboo for these men to imagine, let alone bath and change nappies for their daughters. They expressed shock when I asked them about changing nappies and bathing their daughters. Below are examples of how the men reacted when I posed this question to them:

- Mabhanti:* *I never bath my daughter and I don't think I would do that even if we were staying together with my girlfriend, she can't expect me to do that, no. Think about it Ta Ager, no I wouldn't... what if someone comes in while I am busy bathing her. People would think funny [things] about me, people rape their own kids now (Interview, 31 Jan 2012).*
- Shayela:* *I never bath my daughters or change their nappies. In fact, when their mother baths them I don't even look until she has dressed them up again. I don't want to know how they look like... all I know I love them they are my queens. I am a man braaz (guys) (Interview, 17 Jan 2012).*
- Vuyo:* *Never, never... I told Masindi (his girlfriend) I won't do that. What would she be doing if I have to bath my daughter? I can do anything for her but not that. I take her to crèche every day and I do wash her cloths but that's it for me (Interview, 4 Dec 2011).*

There was consensus among the men that changing nappies and bathing their daughters might raise suspicion that they do inappropriate things to them. They feared being accused of raping or developing sexual interest in their daughters. When Shayela is left with his daughters by his girlfriend the whole day, he would ask his female friends to change their nappies and bath them or wait for their mother to come back from work. These views reflect the different ways boys and girls in black communities are raised and what is considered appropriate for men. None of the men have problems being seen as performing women-like duties by their neighbours because they say as fathers it is their responsibility to do such things for their children.

While this may seem an arbitrary observation, in fact, it links powerfully back to the ways that masculinity is understood and performed in this community. Men are permitted to do certain things that are perceived to be 'woman-like', just as (as we have seen), some women are able to act like men, but some activities are exempt and are marked by violence. In nearby New Crossroads, Ramphele (2000:103) reported high incidents of child sexual abuse by close relatives and sometimes fathers. Such acts

demand action from the men themselves. Unfortunately, where young men have not had opportunities to learn from their fathers, it becomes a daunting task for the community to root it out decisively.

## Conclusion

I have shown in this chapter that, even though many of my informants did not deny pregnancies of their main girlfriends, they subsequently failed to meet traditional obligations such as *intlavulo* which then enables incorporation of a child into the father's own lineage. Lack of clarity on the aim and purpose of compensation for damages especially in this urban context complicate issues around it even further. It seems to me that this ambiguity has opened a loophole for young men to justify their tendency not to meet these cultural expectations.

In black communities in South Africa it is difficult for fathers to fulfil some of the responsibilities associated with fatherhood if he has not met traditional expectations. *Social* attachment is therefore an essential role that fathers must perform in black communities in South Africa. Fathers in most Nguni societies remain the key custodians in enabling their children to have an identity and protection from ancestors. It is for this reason that I see attachment theory as proposed by Bowlby and often applied by psychologists as limiting the value this theory has by only focusing on mothers.

The communal expectation has always been for men to at least fulfil the so-called traditional roles men are known such as providing, breadwinner and to a certain extent being protectors of their families and children. As we have seen above, the men in Gugulethu see other child related functions as inappropriate to be performed by a 'real man'. For a 'real man' to be seen performing such activities is regarded as a sign of a weak man, thus putting his maleness into question especially from other men. As we saw in chapter five when Lion, Beauty's boyfriend, performed domestic chores such as washing Beauty's son's school clothes, other men shook their heads in disapproval. In this community there is particular way masculinity should be performed especially towards 'certain household tasks'.

"Responsible fathering" as an analytic category carries with it a moral meaning of right and wrong "...because some fathering [practices] could be judged irresponsible"

(Doherty et al, 1998:278). According to Doherty and colleagues (ibid), the term “responsible” suggests an “ought”, a set of desired norms for evaluating fathers behaviour.” The benefits of having a responsible involved father are said to be positive for the child’s social functioning (Carlson, 2006); education attainment (Menning, 2006), and economic benefits for children have been highlighted. Fathers generally believe that regardless of how the child came about, taking responsibility is a sign that one is growing. They believe that as an adult one should take responsibility for his child and not raise his child the way he was raised. Sadly, while the men often knew “the right thing to say” or even to do their actions do not follow suit. While the emphasis in African child’s upbringing has always been on collective responsibility, hence the saying a child belongs to the community, historical processes shift how the community is envisaged and the roles that are valorised. I suggest that the absence of a father-figure in the lives of many of the young men in this fast unforgiving environment makes them undervalue a man’s presence in his child’s life. The model of manhood to which these men aspire does not hold being an ideal father high; most of the men aspired rather to be feared on street corners.

Highly valorised masculine identities – being a player, exerting one’s will violently – offset the men’s impoverishment and their inability to accomplish the kinds of employment and relationships that would facilitate their fathering ideals.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

My research, conducted with a core group of twelve men drawn from a prior study of infants born to HIV+ mothers, and situated within a broader set of interviews, conversations and interactions with people in Gugulethu and elsewhere, suggests that the legacies of children's exclusion from positive relationships with fathers endure. While many men were able to overcome the complexities of paternal deficit, not least because other men took on roles of social fathering, my study explores what has happened to young men abandoned by their own fathers and engaged to varying degrees with their own children. The data presented in the thesis are based on men's recollection of their past, their partners'<sup>153</sup> impressions of their fathering, family members and parents views as well as my own impressions on their fathering behaviour and conduct which I formulate based on observations and hanging out with them. Despite the fact that the sample on which I base my discussion in the thesis is small and born of prior research with a specific subset of fathers (those who fathered children with HIV+ women), nevertheless, the patterns I observed in my field site are very similar to those reported in large surveys. For example, studies (Richter et al, 2010; Posel & Devey, 2006; Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011; Posel & Rudwick, 2013) have been reporting for some time now that marriage rates continue to drop among black people and there is no indication of them improving in these current economic times<sup>154</sup>. Similarly, in my sample the marriage rate is very low; while all the men are fathers, only two of the twelve who form the core sample of men regard their relationships as marriage<sup>155</sup>, which means about 83% of the men are unmarried fathers.

I have shown that while the relationships I write about in the thesis are unique in many ways, core cultural tropes, such as the significance of children, the role of marriage, play through them, albeit in ways that undermine their potential. For most young

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<sup>153</sup> I had not been able to interview all their female partners especially in cases where relationships have ended. Likewise some of the men's parents like Shayela's mother no longer live with their sons and they are no longer in good terms.

<sup>154</sup> This is not to say marriages among Africans have ceased because there is a compelling argument that marriages are being initiated but because of their processual nature, are not completed within the lifetime of a partnership.

<sup>155</sup> Ta Pat's living arrangement with Neliswa is problematic as she believes that as long as he has not paid for *lobola*, their living together is cohabitation.



African men in section three of Gugulethu, as elsewhere, the traditional model where a 'real man' is expected and aspire to be *umnumzana wekhaya* (household head) remains elusive. I have demonstrated that my informants had disrupted household experiences with regards to care<sup>156</sup> in particular. Reynolds' alerts (1984 & 2000) about the damage colonialism and apartheid have brought on black family life in South Africa and here are shown to have terrible fruit. The majority of the relationships I observed among men in my sample in Gugulethu are inconsistent, with some almost non-existent. Many of the young men with whom I worked had never stayed in one place with both parents. Their fathers were almost always absent and this did not help in facilitating father-child bonding and preparing these young fathers for adulthood responsibilities. Unlike in other contexts, in which other men may take on the roles of social fatherhood, for the most part, men in my sample had few positive fathering examples. This bears out evidence from quantitative studies (Hall, 2007 & 2014; Richter et al, 2012) which show the high rates of father absence from young peoples' lives. Even in instances where the father lives with his children, as is that case with Sizwe, Siyabulela, Ta Pat, interactions are limited. This kind of fathering practice has to be understood in its entire context especially the men's negative background. Some (Silberschmidt, 2001; Honwana, 2012) blame the organs of state for failing to lay foundation for young people. I concur with Honwana (2012:20) that young people's powerlessness to access resources cannot be exclusively blamed on them but to a failure in socio-economic systems meant to prepare and afford them with opportunities to attain socially-sanctioned adulthood.

Despite a rhetoric which exhorts men to 'be responsible', most of the challenges that confront young African men today can be traced to legacies of colonialism, urbanisation, and apartheid which destroyed clans and families' ability to retain both the specific practices and the meaning and function of traditional practices and the material means by which families could be maintained. When men moved to urban areas in search for work, their absence within households was key in dismantling black families. The experiences of the men with whom I worked demonstrate the tragic consequences of the dissolution of African family life. It is widely held that mothers are to blame for 'spoiling' their sons through giving them money for enjoyment rather than encouraging them to find work. In showing 'love' and 'care', the mothers I worked with protect their sons from the law enforcers and angry community members by hiding them away.

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<sup>156</sup> Likewise their own children are shifted around, meeting new men when their mothers find new love after the collapse of relationships. This is part of everyday life in this poor community.

Parents' 'tendencies' to continue reproducing 'spoilt' sons needs to be understood in its holistic context which is characterised and reinforced by men's violent conduct when expressing their feelings and masculinity. For decades now, this is how African men in particular have learnt to express themselves. This means therefore until effective family oriented intervention strategies happen, violence<sup>157</sup> against women is likely to continue unabated.

I have argued in the thesis that among the Xhosa-speaking people, the construction of a man through traditional processes requires one to overcome pain, liminality and acquiring of a new language of respect. I believe that, 'pain' as an analytic category has not been taken sufficiently seriously in previous studies notwithstanding the fact that it is a key cultural indicator of men's status. As much as the wound inscribed traditionally in one's body gives a sense of communal belonging into adulthood, connection to ancestors and acceptance of the ritual, it also gives one a permanent socio-communal status and engenders respect. Discussions around the ritual of *ukwaluka* can no longer afford to be treated like a 'secret' due to the increasing fatalities and losses of initiates' manhood associated with it now. *Amadoda welokishi's* ('men from the town': men who were initiated in urban areas) willingness to socialise with 'boys' shows the flexibility of the tradition in different settings over time. There is no doubt though that *amadoda welokishi*, those at least who are familiar with the Xhosa accepted behaviour, are taking a huge risk when they associate themselves with 'boys' as their manhood is already questionable and compromised in the eyes of *amadoda wasezilalini* (rural circumcised men). I have shown in the thesis that my informants, unable to perform masculine identities strongly valorised in 'traditional culture' perform their masculinity through risk taking, violence against women, 'winning' women for pleasure (sex), and using drugs. Perhaps for them this is the best way they know and understand masculinity without really considering the long term implications such conduct has on their ability to successfully achieve lineage attachment of their children.

Being initiated, men often assume that men will have power above minority groups especially over women. But when they realise that in reality they have to rely on the same women they are meant to lead, it turns into humiliation. Thus the men with whom I worked men use violence, to reassert their dominance in both private and public

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<sup>157</sup> We have seen the failure of state organs throughout the thesis, failing to assist children in need, and lack of visibility of national groups aimed at assisting men to become better fathers.

spheres. So the narratives shared in the thesis point to a societal problem rather than a phenomenon specific to Gugulethu. In other words, there is a big disjuncture between the traditional definition of 'manhood' and the reality young fathers find themselves in.

We also learnt from this group that, unlike younger children who are quite mobile, these men are not as mobile as many migrants who still maintain regular contact with those in the countryside. In fact, this group considerably more immobile than men of older generations. Of course this is a product of shifts in the political-economy, such that people are now not legally constrained from living where they like. For these young men, however, dangers in their social environments mean that their social networks are limited, making it difficult for them to network with people outside their social circles. Most of their friends are what is known locally as *ongantweni* (pl - useless individuals). The young in this community do not have many external support systems. Feelings of rejection and abandonment characterise their lives which seem to lead to reckless life styles. In some cases this rejection is the cause of these men's anger and results in violence.

Finally, in the context in which *lobola* and 'damages' payments remain important avenues to securing men's rights and access to children, men's inability to meet cultural requirements has potentially detrimental effects. In the past, men used to be 'grounded in families' but my research suggest that now men are grounded in other men, and the relationships that characterise these networks. Post-apartheid efforts at remedy have benefitted many, but as I have shown, this is not the case for all. While being a father is still as exciting and rewarding as it was in the past because it helps to celebrate masculinity, ensuring that a man's legacy lives on long after he is no more, personal struggles with drug addictions, unemployment and deep structural barriers including cultural obligations facing youth lead to some questioning the ability of today's young fathers to man up and support their children.

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### **Appendix A: Interview Schedule**

Sizwe: Interview, 5 February 2009.

Sizwe: Field notes, 23 March 2009.

Sizwe: Interview, 2 April 2009.

Lulama: Interview, 3 June 2009.

Minazana: Field notes, 10 June 2009.

Sizwe: Field notes, 10 June 2009.

Mams: Interview, 24 June 2009.

Sizwe: Interview, 15 Jan 2010.

Sizwe: Interview, 10 March 2010.

Minazana: Interview, 15 March 2010.

Marhonxa, Interview, 7 Sept 2010 (traditional healer).

Mahlasela, Interview, 15 Sept 2010 (traditional healer).

Mabhanti: Field notes, 10 Nov 2012.

Sizwe: Field notes, 1 March 2011.

Sizwe: Interview, 18 May 2011.

Lungiswa: Interview, 2 Sept 2011.

Vuyo: Interview, 4 Dec 2011.

Ntemie: Interview, 10 Jan 2012.

Shayela: Interview, 17 Jan 2012.

Mabhanti: Interview, 31 Jan 2012.

Mabhanti: Interview, 31 Jan 2012.

Player: Field notes, 10 Feb 2012.

Beauty: Interview, 29 February 2012.

Neliswa: Interview, 1 March 2012.

Asanda: Interview, 6 March 2012.

Lion: Field notes, 7 April 2012.

Ta Pat, Interview, 13 April 2012.

Player: Interview, 1 May 2012.

Beauty: Field notes, 10 May 2012.

Yonela (Player's girlfriend): Interview, 12 May 2012.

Mams: Field notes, 26 May 2012.

Vuyo: Interview, 10 June 2012.

Community member: Field notes, 09 August 2012.

Player: Field notes, 18 August 2012.

Player's mother: Field notes, 22 August 2012.

Ntemie's mother: Field notes, 22 Sept 2012.

Sizwe: Field notes, 14 Oct 2012.

Minazana: Field notes, 22 Oct 2012.

Siyabulela: Interview, 11 November 2012.

Siyabulela: Interview, 3 December 2012.

Zoleka: Interview, 3 Dec 2012.

Mams: Interview, 27 Feb 2013.

Sizwe: Interview, 1 March 2013.

Minazana: Interview, 3 March 2013.

Siyabulela: Field notes, 22 March 2013.

Mams: Interview, 15 Dec 2013.

Group Discussion, 19 July 2012.

Rashidi's mother: Field notes, 19 August 2012.

## **Appendix B: Gugulethu Crime Statistics 2004 – 2014**

Gugulethu (WC) [169] for April to March 2004/2005 - 2013/2014										
CRIME CATEGORY	April 2004 to March 2005	April 2005 to March 2006	April 2006 to March 2007	April 2007 to March 2008	April 2008 to March 2009	April 2009 to March 2010	April 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to March 2012	April 2012 to March 2013	April 2013 to March 2014
<b>CONTACT CRIMES ( CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON)</b>										
Murder	146	154	161	153	135	110	150	120	129	150
Total Sexual Crimes	243	247	247	206	214	190	232	257	265	242
Attempted murder	100	110	105	80	91	80	88	106	74	126
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	935	849	720	642	564	568	634	663	646	737
Common assault	992	808	616	483	544	540	595	619	616	525
Common robbery	500	231	223	171	140	148	147	192	250	228
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	704	793	554	484	336	347	364	421	577	641
<b>CONTACT-RELATED CRIMES</b>										
Arson	22	20	25	13	9	17	18	24	21	20
Malicious injury to property	607	574	547	422	372	401	420	447	620	541
<b>PROPERTY-RELATED CRIMES</b>										
Burglary at non-residential premises	54	43	51	91	62	85	113	163	134	122
Burglary at residential premises	593	471	426	391	394	452	457	454	527	500
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	101	133	132	152	126	157	114	134	103	111
Theft out of or from motor vehicle	97	89	73	101	111	196	174	249	377	278
Stock-theft	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>CRIME DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION</b>										
Unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition	114	102	106	120	128	117	118	110	103	73
Drug-related crime	324	314	383	449	595	813	1136	1507	1649	1796
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	69	61	84	114	191	321	436	510	358	257
<b>OTHER SERIOUS CRIMES</b>										
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	1 350	1 077	534	401	450	508	615	891	855	802
Commercial crime	68	52	38	72	136	115	146	219	176	107
Shoplifting	9	13	11	18	8	226	493	411	498	194
<b>SUBCATEGORIES OF AGGRAVATED ROBBERY</b>										
Carjacking	82	118	60	55	34	44	31	54	58	77
Truck hijacking	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	0	3
Robbery at residential premises	11	20	26	44	38	45	37	41	52	79
Robbery at non-residential premises	5	3	0	10	27	20	40	67	69	51
<b>OTHER CRIME CATEGORIES</b>										
Culpable homicide	18	14	17	26	11	12	18	7	13	9
Public violence	3	2	7	6	17	7	5	5	4	9
Crimen injuria	239	149	92	47	67	55	55	92	148	112
Neglect and ill-treatment of children	47	30	19	17	30	29	17	13	8	10
Kidnapping	15	18	8	10	4	3	12	18	29	15

